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CLASSICAL
ENGLISH LETTER-WRITER:

OR,
EPISTOLARY SELECTIONS;

DESIGNED
TO IMPROVE YOUNG PERSONS
IN THE ART OF LETTER-WRITING, AND IN THE
PRINCIPLES OF VIRTUE AND PIETY.

With introductory **RULES** and **OBSERVATIONS** on
EPISTOLARY COMPOSITION; and **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES** of the
writers from whom the letters are selected.

—
"Scarcely any species of composition deserves more to be cultivated
than the epistolary style, since none is of more various or frequent use,
through the whole subordination of human life.".....Dr. JOHNSON.

—
BY THE AUTHOR OF
"LESSONS FOR YOUNG PERSONS IN HUMBLE LIFE."

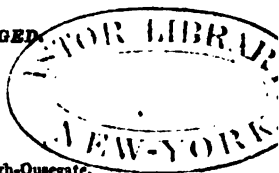
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SECOND EDITION, ENLARGED.

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York:

Printed by Thomas Wilson and Sons, High-Ousegate,
For **LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, and BROWN,**
Paternoster-Row, London: and for **WILSON and SONS, York.**

1821.

23
Price, bound, 5s.



Entered at Stationers' Hall.

PREFACE.

A JUDICIOUS selection from the letters of eminent writers, may properly find place among the various publications, designed for the instruction and amusement of young persons. By presenting to their view, some of the best models, both with respect to language and sentiment, which English literature affords, it will render them considerable assistance in acquiring the epistolary art. It will, at the same time, furnish them with a pleasing diversity of reading, and enlarge their experience of the affairs of the world, without endangering their morals, or too much diverting their attention from severer studies; and, under the sanction of highly respectable names, it will inculcate, in a peculiarly striking and influential manner, the most important principles of virtue and piety.

To accomplish these objects, is the design of the present work. The letters of which it is composed, are commendable by the correctness, and, in many instances, by the elegance, of their diction, and by the pure morality which they breathe. They have been very attentively revised, and, where necessary, abridged, in order to adapt them to the nature and limits of this work. They are taken from original British writers, not from translations, that they may exhibit the English language in its native purity, liveliness, and simplicity. They have chiefly been written in modern times, and on domestic and familiar subjects: they are, therefore, the better calculated to instruct and interest the young reader, and to afford the most useful and pleasing specimens of episto-

lary composition.—“The importance of writing letters with propriety,” says Dr. Johnson, “justly claims to be considered with care; since, next to the power of pleasing with his presence, every man would wish to be able to give delight at a distance. This great art should be diligently taught, the rather because of those letters which are most useful, and by which the general business of life is transacted, there are no examples easily to be found. It seems the usual fault of those who undertake this part of education, that they propose for the exercise of their scholars, occasions which rarely happen, and neglect those without which life cannot proceed. It is possible to pass many years without the necessity of writing panegyrics or epithalamiums; but every man has frequent occasion to make a narrative of the minute incidents of common life. On these subjects, therefore, young persons should be taught to think justly, and to write clearly, neatly, and succinctly, lest they come from school into the world without any acquaintance with common affairs, and stand idle spectators of mankind, in expectation that some great event will give them an opportunity to exert their rhetoric.”

The biographical notices of the writers from whom the letters are selected, will, it is presumed, be found a useful and an interesting appendage to this work. Many of them have been extended to a greater length than was originally intended; because it was hoped that, whether read in a continued series, or according to the order of the letters to which they immediately relate, they would prove peculiarly instructive and pleasing to young persons, and exhibit to them some striking, ennobling, and animating views of human life and human character.

INTRODUCTORY RULES AND OBSERVATIONS

ON

EPISTOLARY COMPOSITION.



To write letters well is an attainment of great importance. It affords scope for the exercise and display of the highest powers of the mind, and the finest feelings of the heart. It is of constant utility in every department of business, and in every endearing relation of social and domestic life.

The art of epistolary writing, as the late translator of Pliny's letters has observed, was esteemed by the Romans among the number of liberal and polite accomplishments; and Cicero, in some of his letters, mentions, with great pleasure, the elegant specimens of epistolary composition which he had received from his son. It seems indeed to have formed part of the education of the Romans; and it deserves to have a share in ours. "It has," says Mr. Locke, "so much to do in all the occurrences of human life, that no gentleman can avoid showing himself in this kind of writing. Occasions will daily force him to make this use of his pen; which, besides the consequences that, in his affairs, his well or ill managing of it often draws after it, always lays him open to a severer examination of his breeding, his sense, and his abilities, than oral discourses, whose transient faults dying for the most part with the sound that gives them life, and so not subject to a strict review, more easily escape observation and censure."

To facilitate to children and young persons the acquisition of the epistolary art, they should frequently be exer-

cised in writing letters to their absent friends or relatives ; on such occasions as naturally occur in domestic life, or on subjects chosen by themselves, and adapted to their taste and acquirements. Every error which they commit, in orthography or in punctuation, in language or in sentiment, should be pointed out and fully explained to them, either by their instructor, or some other friend, previously to the letters being sent ; or, afterwards, by the persons to whom they are addressed. But no fault should be corrected by a teacher or friend, or on his suggestion ; and the letters should always be sent exactly in the state in which they come from the pupils' own hands, except the occasion be very important, and the writers very urgent to be allowed to correct and transcribe their little performances. Thus, will some of the best and most operative feelings of their minds be powerfully excited ; their application, their desire of improvement, will be quickened ; and they will probably look forward, with anxious expectation, to a future opportunity of gratifying themselves and their friends, by an exhibition of their enlarged abilities and attainments. It is scarcely necessary to add that these letters should be voluntary, not compelled ; rather allowed as a privilege, than required as a task. "When children," says Mr. Locke, "understand how to write English with due connexion, propriety, and order, and are pretty well masters of a tolerable narrative style, they may be advanced to the writing of letters ; in which they should not be put upon any strains of wit or compliment, but taught to express their own plain, easy sense, without any incoherence, confusion, or roughness."

To practice, should be added the frequent and attentive perusal of letters, written with correctness, ease, and elegance ; for which purpose, the epistolary selections contained in this volume, will, it is presumed, prove peculiarly useful and acceptable. But young persons should be

cautioned not to adopt any sentiment, or any expression, even of the most approved writer, that is not consistent with their own judgment, and with the thoughts, and feelings, of their own minds. "Nothing is beautiful but what is true," is a maxim of universal acceptance; but it applies, with peculiar force, to epistolary communications.

Letter-writing is a subject of so varied and extensive a nature, that it can scarcely be reduced to rule, or taught by precept. But some instruction respecting it, may doubtless be communicated to young persons, through the medium of rules; and the following, together with the observations that accompany them, have been formed, with particular care, for that purpose. They will, it is hoped, be found of real and practical utility; and afford considerable assistance to young persons, in avoiding error, and obtaining some degree of excellence, in epistolary composition.

I. When you write a letter to any person, express the same sentiments, and use the same language, as you would do if you were conversing with him. "Write eloquently," says Mr. Gray, "that is from your heart, in such expressions as that will furnish."

This rule is of primary importance, for the attainment of ease and simplicity in epistolary composition. But it will not, with equal efficacy, promote correctness and propriety, unless we accustom ourselves to think, and to express our thoughts, accurately and properly, in common conversation.

II. Before you begin a letter, especially when it is on any occasion of importance, weigh well in your own mind the design and purport of it; and consider, very attentively, what sentiments are most proper for you to express, and your correspondent to read.

The observance of this rule is highly useful. To those who have few thoughts, it affords an opportunity of adding to the stock ; and to those who are overwhelmed by the abundance, or perplexed by the variety, of them, it gives ample scope for selection. When we have well considered a subject, and thoroughly understand it, we can scarcely fail, with a moderate degree of attention and of literary attainments, to express ourselves clearly, distinctly, and even forcibly.—Many persons make a rough draught of the letter they design to write ; which, when they have corrected and improved it as much as they can, they transcribe. On occasions of particular difficulty or importance, this practice is not to be condemned. It is frequently recommended, or allowed, to children and young persons, in their first epistolary essays, though on the most trivial subjects : but if it should be long continued, or become habitual, it will prove a great hinderance to facility and despatch in writing ; which are always useful, and often absolutely necessary, in the commerce of the world.

To assist invention and to promote order, it may, as some writers on epistolary composition recommend, occasionally be of use to make, in the mind, a division of a letter into three parts, the beginning, middle, and end : or, in other words, into the exordium or introduction ; the narration or proposition ; and the conclusion. The exordium or introduction should be employed, not indeed with the formality of rhetoric, but with the ease of genuine politeness and benevolence, in conciliating favour and attention ; the narration or proposition, in stating the business with clearness and precision ; the conclusion, in confirming what has been premised, in making apologies where any are necessary, and in cordial expressions of respect, esteem, or affection.

“ Ease and simplicity in epistolary composition,” as Dr.

Blair justly observes, "are not to be understood as importing entire carelessness. In writing to the most intimate friend, a certain degree of attention, both to the subject and the style, is requisite and becoming. It is no more than what we owe both to ourselves, and to the friend with whom we correspond. A slovenly and negligent manner of writing, is a disobliging mark of want of respect. The liberty, besides, of writing letters with too careless a hand, is apt to betray persons into imprudence in what they write. An improper expression in conversation may be forgotten and pass away ; but when we take the pen into our hand, we must remember, that, '*Littera scripta manet.*'"

III. Let all your sentiments and expressions be consistent with truth and virtue. Avoid exaggerated and extravagant professions of regard ; suppress every unjust or malignant thought ; encourage pious and benevolent affections in your own mind, and in the minds of those whom you address.

This rule is important in conversation ; but much more so in letters : because, writing allows an opportunity for consideration, which renders error of every kind more inexcusable ; and what is written usually makes a stronger and more permanent impression than what is merely spoken.—"Let me conjure you," says bishop Atterbury in a letter to his son, "never to say any thing, either in a letter or in common conversation, that you do not think ; but always let your mind and your words go together, even on the most slight and trivial occasions. Shelter not the least degree of insincerity under the notion of a compliment ; which, as far as it deserves to be practised by a man of probity, is only the most civil and obliging way of saying what we really mean : whoever employs it otherwise, throws away truth for what he fancies good breeding ; and

I need not tell you how little his character gains by such an exchange."

To endeavour, in all our personal intercourse with our relatives, and friends, and acquaintances, to please and edify them, and, when we are absent from them, to make our letters to them, mementós not only of affection or of kindness, but also of an earnest desire to promote their welfare, both in this world and in the world to come, is an important duty, and one of the greatest pleasures that a pious and feeling mind can enjoy. Even in letters of business, opportunities often occur of suggesting, in the most easy and delicate manner, sentiments of a moral and religious nature, which may prove of great and lasting benefit. But such sentiments should not be introduced for the purpose of ostentatious display, or any other of a still more culpable nature: they should spring from the heart, and from a thorough conviction of their propriety, or they will produce but a faint impression either on him who writes, or on him who reads.

IV. Vary your style; and adapt it to the subject of your letter, and also to the character, the station, and other peculiar circumstances, of the person to whom you write.

As the occasion on which letters are written, and the situation, feelings, and acquirements, of those who write them, as well as of those to whom they are written, are so various, a great diversity of style necessarily becomes requisite. On important subjects, it should be strong and solemn; on lighter subjects, easy, and simple; in exhortation, earnest; in persuasion, mild; in consolation, tender; in congratulation, lively; in requests, modest; in commendation, warm; to superiors, respectful; to inferiors, courteous; to friends and companions, familiar.

The sentiments of Dr. Johnson and Dr. Knox, on this

point, are highly worthy of attention. "The qualities of the epistolary style most frequently required," says the former of these writers, (Rambler, No. 152,) "are ease and simplicity, an even flow of unlaboured diction, and an artless arrangement of obvious sentiments. But these directions are no sooner applied to use, than their scantiness and imperfection become evident. Letters are written to the great and to the mean, to the learned and the ignorant; at rest and in distress; in sport and in passion. Nothing can be more improper than ease and laxity of expression, when the importance of the subject impresses solicitude, or the dignity of the person exacts reverence.— That letters should be written with strict conformity to nature is true, because nothing but conformity to nature can make any composition beautiful or just. But it is natural to depart from familiarity of language upon occasions not familiar. Whatever elevates the sentiments will consequently raise the expression; whatever fills us with hope or terror, will produce some perturbation of images. Wherever we are studious to please, we are afraid of trusting our first thoughts, and endeavour to recommend our opinion by studied ornaments, accuracy of method, and elegance of style.—The epistolary writer may, without censure, comply with the varieties of his matter. If great events are to be related, he may, with all the solemnity of an historian, deduce them from their causes, connect them with their concomitants, and trace them to their consequences. If a disputed position is to be established, or a remote principle to be investigated, he may detail his reasonings with all the nicety of syllogistic method. If a menace is to be averted, or a benefit implored, he may, without any violation of the edicts of criticism, call every power of rhetoric to his assistance, and try every inlet at which love or pity enters the heart."

"Much has been said on the epistolary style," observes Dr. Knox, in his *Essays Moral and Literary*; "as if any

one style could be appropriated to the great variety of subjects which are treated of in letters. Ease, it is true, should distinguish familiar letters, written on the common affairs of life; because the mind is usually at ease while they are composed. But, even in these, topics incidentally arise, which require elevated expression, and an inverted construction. Not to raise the style on these occasions, is to write unnaturally; for nature teaches us to express animated emotions of every kind in animated language. The dependent writes unnaturally to a superior, in the style of familiarity. The suppliant writes unnaturally, if he rejects the figures dictated by distress. Conversation admits of every style but the poetic; and what are letters but written conversation? The great rule is, to follow nature, and to avoid an affected manner."

V. Scrupulously adhere to the rules of grammar. Select and apply all your words with a strict regard to their proper signification; and whenever you have any doubt respecting the correctness or propriety of them, consult a dictionary, or some good living authority. Avoid, with particular care, all errors in orthography, in punctuation, and in the arrangement of words and phrases.

Errors of this nature often obscure or pervert the meaning of the writer; and they leave on the mind of an intelligent reader a very unfavourable impression. When the rules of grammar have been thoroughly learned, a constant attention to practise them, both in speaking and in writing, will soon render them familiar; and far from occasioning (as some apprehend) any stiffness of style, will be promotive of real ease, simplicity, and elegance. "Let nothing though of a trifling nature," says bishop Atterbury in a letter to his son, "pass through your pen negligently. Get but the way of writing correctly and justly, time and use will teach you to write readily." The great accuracy

and correctness of composition for which Dr. Johnson was so highly distinguished, and which seemed to cost him so little effort as to be almost natural to him, were owing, he used to say, to the constant care and attention with which, from early life, he avoided or corrected error in every thing he said or wrote, though on the most trivial occasion. "The effusion of a moment" becomes the just characteristic and the highest encomium of all familiar writing, when a habit of accuracy has previously been acquired.

VI. Endeavour, particularly in letters on business, to express your meaning as briefly as the nature of the subject will admit; and in such terms as are least likely to be misunderstood. Avoid unnecessary tautology, explanation, and long or frequent parentheses. Place the principal circumstances in the most prominent point of view; suppress, or slightly mention, those which are of a trivial nature. Make no quotations in foreign languages, nor any classical allusions, however apt or beautiful, except when you are writing to persons to whom they will be intelligible and pleasing. Before you seal your letter, always read it over very attentively; and correct every inaccuracy or error which you discover in it, that might, in the slightest degree, perplex or mislead your correspondent.

A plain, concise style is the best adapted for business. Letters of sentiment, of affection, and friendship, naturally admit of more enlargement, and occasionally of embellishment.—Long sentences should generally be avoided in epistolary composition. They may please the ear: but they usually occasion some degree of obscurity; and they are burthensome to the memory. Well constructed sentences that are short, or of a moderate length, strike the mind forcibly and agreeably; and the tenour of them is easily remembered.

VII. Let the exterior appearance of your letter, as well as its intrinsic qualities, be the object of your attention. Write a fair and legible hand. Be sparing in the use of dashes, interlineations, and underlinings. Make no abbreviations in orthography, except those which are warranted by the general practice of the most correct writers. Always leave a vacancy for the seal or wafer, in order that when your correspondent opens your letter, no part of the writing may be torn. Write your name at length, with particular distinctness and uniformity, and in a rather larger character than that in which your letter is written. Avoid postscripts, except when they are necessary for the mentioning of some circumstance that occurred after your letter was written. Fold, direct, and seal your letter neatly and properly.

To write, with ease and expedition, a good, uniform, and perfectly legible hand, is indispensable in business; and is highly useful in every station, and in all circumstances, of life. Good hand-writing sets off and recommends the best composition; and is some apology for the worst. "I maintain," says an ingenious author, "that it is in every man's power to write what hand he pleases; and, consequently, that he ought to write a good one *."

Dashes, underlinings, and interlineations, are much used

* On the subject of writing, the following directions may be of use to young persons.—Form every letter and word distinctly. As soon as you can write well, learn to write quick; not a stiff, formal hand, but a genteel and liberal one, or, what is called, a running hand, which is most favourable to ease and expedition; but be particularly careful that your writing may be large and strong enough, to be easily legible by others, and by yourselves when you advance in life. Let the lines on every page of your letter, correspond exactly to each other; leave sufficient spaces between them, to exhi-

by unskilful and careless writers, merely as substitutes for proper punctuation, and a correct, regular mode of expression. The frequent recurrence of them greatly defaces a letter ; and is equally inconsistent with neatness of appearance and regularity of composition. All occasion for interlineations may usually be superseded by a little previous thought and attention. Dashes are proper only when the sense evidently requires a greater pause than the common stops designate. And, in a well constructed sentence, to underline a word, is wholly useless, except, on some very particular occasion, we wish to attract peculiar attention to it, or to give it an uncommon degree of importance or emphasis.

Of the propriety of leaving a vacancy for the seal, the following circumstance, which is similar to what frequently occurs, affords a striking proof. "I had a letter from a friend lately," says Mr. Orton in a letter to a young clergyman, "who desired me to transact some business for him, which was the chief purport of his letter ; but he had unfortunately put the wafer on the most material part of the commission, so that I could not tell what he had desired me to do for him."

Postscripts have a very awkward appearance ; and they generally indicate thoughtlessness and inattention. To make use of them in order to convey assurances of respect

bit the writing on one line quite distinct from that on the preceding and the following line ; and make them even and regular, which, by attention and habit, you can readily accomplish, without accustoming yourselves to the use of ruled lines. Let your ink be good, and of a proper blackness ; which contributes, very materially, to neatness and distinctness in writing. Learn to make and mend your own pens : do not, however, let your writing depend too much on your pen ; but accustom yourselves, upon occasion, to write well, or at least legibly, with an indifferent or even a bad pen.

or affection to the person to whom you write, or to those who are intimately connected with him, is particularly improper: it seems to imply that the sentiments which you express, are so slightly impressed on your mind, that you had almost forgotten them, or thought them scarcely worth mentioning.

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CLASSICAL ENGLISH LETTER-WRITER.

PART I.

LETTERS ARRANGED ACCORDING TO THEIR SUBJECTS.

CHAPTER I.

NARRATIVE LETTERS.

LETTER I.

Mr. Gay to Mr. Fenton.—Account of two young persons killed by lightning.

Stanton-Harcourt, Aug. 9, 1718.

The only news that you can expect to have from me here, is news from Heaven, for I am quite out of the world ; and scarcely any thing can reach me, except the noise of thunder, which undoubtedly you have heard too. We have read, in old authors, of high towers levelled by it to the ground, while the humble valleys have escaped. But, to let you see that the contrary to this sometimes happens, I must acquaint you, that a high and most extravagant heap of towers, in this neighbourhood, stands still undefaced, while a cock of barley, in our next field, has been consumed to ashes. Would to God that this heap of barley had been all that had perished !

Beneath this little shelter, sat two much more constant lovers, than ever were found, in romance, under the shade of a beech tree. John Hewet, was a well-set man, of about five and twenty ; Sarah Drew might be rather called comely than beautiful, and she was about the same age. They had passed through the various

labours of the year together, with the greatest satisfaction. If she milked, it was his morning and evening care to bring the cows to her hand. It was but last fair that he bought her a present of green silk for her straw hat ; and the posy on her silver ring was of his choosing. Their love was the talk of the whole neighbourhood : scandal never affirmed that they had any other views than the lawful possession of each other in marriage. It was that very morning that he had obtained the consent of her parents ; and it was but till the next week that they were to wait for the happy day. Perhaps, in the intervals of their work, they were talking of the wedding-clothes ; and John was suiting several sorts of poppies and field-flowers to her complexion, to choose her a knot for the wedding-day. While they were conversing together, (it was on the last day of July, between two and three in the afternoon,) the clouds grew black ; and such a storm of thunder and lightning ensued, that all the labourers made the best of their way to what shelter the trees and hedges afforded. Sarah was frightened ; and fell down, in a swoon, on a heap of barley. John, who never separated from her, sat down by her side, having raked together two or three heaps, the better to secure her from the storm. Immediately there was heard so loud a crack, as if Heaven had burst asunder. The labourers, solicitous for each other's safety, called to one another throughout the field. Those who called to our lovers, receiving no answer, stepped to the place where they lay ; perceived the barley all in a smoke ; and then spied this faithful pair : John with one arm about Sarah's neck, and the other held over her, as if to screen her from the lightning. They were struck dead, and they stiffened, in this tender posture. Sarah's left eye-brow was singed, and there appeared a black spot on her

breast ; her lover was all over black : but not the least signs of life were found in either.

Attended by their melancholy companions, they were conveyed to the town ; and the next day were interred in one grave, in the church-yard, at Stanton-Harcourt. Lord Harcourt, at Mr. Pope's and my request, has caused a stone to be placed over them, upon condition that we furnished the epitaph, which is as follows :

When Eastern lovers feed the fun'ral fire,
On the same pile the faithful pair expire :
Here pitying Heav'n that virtue mutual found,
And blasted both, that it might neither wound.
Hearts so sincere th' Almighty saw well pleas'd,
Sent his own lightning, and the victims seiz'd.

But my lord is apprehensive that the country people will not understand this epitaph ; and Mr. Pope says he will make one, with something of Scripture in it, and with as little of poetry as Hopkins and Sternhold *.

I am your &c.

John Gay.

* The following was the epitaph :

Near this place lie the bodies of JOHN HEWET and SARAH DREW, an industrious young man, and a virtuous maiden, of this parish ; who, being at harvest work, (with several others,) were in one instant killed by lightning, on the last day of July, 1718.

Think not by rig'rous judgment seiz'd,
A pair so faithful could expire ;
Victims so pure Heav'n saw well pleas'd,
And snatch'd them in celestial fire.

Live well, and fear no sudden fate :
When God calls Virtue to the grave,
Alike 'tis justice, soon or late ;
Mercy alike to kill or save.

Virtue unmov'd can bear the call,
And face the flash that melts the ball.

LETTER II.

Dr. Beattie to Mrs. Montagu.—The poor widow.*

Peterhead, Oct. 11, 1784.

Madam,

I arrived at Peterhead on the first of October. I went instantly to Mrs. Arbuthnot, whom I found in tolerable health, sitting solitary by her little fire, and amusing herself, as usual, with a book and her work. She was the more pleased to see me, as my arrival was unexpected; for she had not heard that I was returned to Scotland. After she had asked all the customary questions, I told her, without betraying any emotion, or seeming to have any thing in view but her amusement, that if she were at leisure, I would tell her a story. I accordingly began; and, agreeably to the commission with which you honoured me, I made a very long and circumstantial story of it, recapitulating, as far as my memory would enable me, every thing which passed in that conversation at Sandleford, of which she and her aunt, Mrs. Cockburn, were the subject. I saw she was greatly affected with the idea of your thinking

* Mrs. Arbuthnot, the subject of this letter, was the daughter of a minister of the episcopal church of Scotland. She married, at the age of twenty eight, captain Andrew Arbuthnot, master of a vessel that traded from Peterhead to America. He died of a fever, at Charlestown, in South Carolina, about three years after their marriage. The vessel, on its return to Peterhead, was wrecked, and the whole of the captain's property was lost. His widow, with an infant son, was left destitute. She struggled hard to maintain herself and her child by her labour. Her friends contrived to assist her, so as not to hurt the delicacy of her feelings; and she frequently said, that she sometimes received aid as if it had dropped from Heaven, without her knowing from what hand it came. Her son, by means of a small bursary, received his education at the

so favourably of her aunt, and with your condescension in inquiring so minutely into her own history and character ; but I did not throw out a single hint that could lead her to anticipate what was to follow. At last, when I found that her heart was thoroughly warmed, and recollected your observation, that the human heart in that state becomes malleable, I hastened to the conclusion, which I expressed in the simplest and fewest words possible ; so that the whole struck her at the same instant. She attempted an exclamation, but it was inarticulate, and almost resembled a scream ; the tears ran down her furrowed cheeks ; she could only say, " O dear, I cannot speak one word ! " and she seemed almost exhausted with the effort which had produced that short sentence. I desired her not to attempt to speak, but to hear me a little further. I then told her, that such acts of beneficence were familiar to you ; and mentioned some instances that had come to my knowledge, particularly that of Mrs. Williams. She held up her eyes and hands, sometimes in silent adoration of Providence, and sometimes with the most passionate expressions of gratitude to her noble bene-

university of Aberdeen ; and afterwards, by the interest of some of his father's relations, obtained a commission in the army, in which he served with reputation. He died at an early age in the West Indies, at a period when he had the prospect of a promotion, by which he might have been enabled to contribute to his mother's more comfortable subsistence. Thus bereft of every consolation, except what she derived from religion, and from the soothing tenderness of her friends, she continued for many years in virtuous and respectable poverty. Dr. Beattie having represented her situation to Mrs. Montagu, that lady settled on her an annuity ; which raised her from her contented penury, to a state of comparative affluence. She died, in the year 1793, at the very advanced age of eighty six.

factress. In a word, madam, she accepted your bounty in a way that did honour both to her understanding and to her feelings ; and I left her to compose herself by silent meditation. Indeed, I made haste to get away after I had executed my commission ; for the scene was so delightfully affecting, that I could stand it no longer.

When the news was known next day in the town, it diffused a very general joy ; and many an honest heart invoked the blessing of Heaven upon your head : for Mrs. Arbuthnot's character is exceedingly respected by all who know her ; and her narrow circumstances have long been the subject of general regret. The delicacy of her mind was well known : which, no doubt, discouraged some persons from making a direct offer of their services ; though indirectly, I believe, that some little matters have been done for her benefit. Yet, since her husband's death, which happened four and forty years ago, I know not whether she was at any time worth ten pounds a year. With this small appointment, she has constantly maintained the appearance of a gentlewoman ; she has received the visits of the most respectable people in this town and neighbourhood, whom she was always happy to entertain with a dish of tea ; and among her visitors she can reckon the dutchess of Gordon, the countess of Errol, lord Saltoun's family, sir William Forbes, and many other persons of fashion. What is yet more strange, with this small appointment, she has always found means to be charitable to the poor ; and when I have seen her dealing out her alms, which was commonly a handful of oatmeal to each person, I know not how often she has put me in mind of the widow in the Gospel.

I am afraid Mrs. Arbuthnot will not long stand in need of your bounty ; for she is seventy six years of age,

and suffers much from a cough and an asthma.—I was introduced to her about twenty years ago, by her nephew, Mr. Arbuthnot of Edinburgh, and I have since been as attentive to her as I could ; of which she is so sensible, that sometimes, in the extravagance of her gratitude, she has called me her good genius. She actually gave me that appellation in the first draught of the letter, which she wrote to you about a week ago, and which, I hope, you have received ; but I prevailed upon her to change the phrase.

Permit me now, madam, to thank you for your most obliging letter of the twentieth of September ; which, after wandering long from place to place, has overtaken me at last. The harvest scenes, that interest you so much, were also highly interesting to me in the course of my journey through England : for the weather was very fine ; and every sithe and sickle, and the waggons, and the gleaners, were all in motion. With peculiar satisfaction, I took notice of that laudable English custom, of permitting the poor and the infirm to glean the fields.

How shall I thank you, madam, and my amiable friend, Mr. Montagu, for the kind invitation you give my son and me to pass some part of the ensuing spring at Sandleford ? Be assured, it will be a grievous disappointment to us both, if we cannot get that matter accomplished. I hope we shall find no difficulty in it, if my domestic affairs continue quiet, as I thank God they are at present.

I am, madam, &c.

James Beattie.

LETTER III.

*Dr. Beattie to the dutchess of Gordon, informing her
of the death of his son.*

Aberdeen, Dec. 1, 1790.

Knowing with what kindness and condescension your grace is interested in every thing that concerns me and my family, I take the liberty to inform you, that my son James is dead; that the last duties to him are now paid; and that I am endeavouring to return, with the little ability that is left me, and with entire submission to the will of Providence, to the ordinary business of life. I have lost one who was always a pleasing companion; but who, for the last five or six years, was one of the most entertaining and instructive companions that ever man was blessed with: for his mind comprehended almost every science; he was a most attentive observer of life and manners; a master of classical learning; and he possessed an exuberance of wit and humour, a force of understanding, and a correctness and delicacy of taste, beyond any other person of his age whom I have ever known.

He was taken ill in the night of the thirtieth of November, 1789; and from that time his decline commenced. It was long what physicians call a nervous atrophy; but, towards the end of June, symptoms began to appear of his lungs being affected. Goats' milk, and afterwards asses' milk, were procured for him in abundance; and such exercise as he could bear, he regularly took. These means lengthened his days, no doubt; and alleviated his sufferings, which, indeed, were not often severe. But, in spite of all that could be done, he grew weaker and weaker; and died on the nineteenth of November, 1790, without complaint or pain, without

even a groan or a sigh; retaining to the last moment the use of his rational faculties. He lived twenty two years and thirteen days. Many weeks before death came, he saw it approaching; and he met it with such composure and pious resignation, as may no doubt be equalled, but cannot be surpassed.

He has left many things in writing, serious and humorous, scientific and miscellaneous, prose and verse, Latin and English; but it will be a long time before I shall be able to harden my heart so far as to revise them.

I have the satisfaction to know, that every thing has been done for him that could be done; and every thing according to the best medical advice that Scotland could afford. For the last five months, I kept in my family a young medical friend, who was constantly at hand: and from the beginning to the end of my son's illness, I was always either by him, or within call. From these circumstances, your grace will readily believe, that I derive no little satisfaction. But my chief comfort arises from reflecting on the particulars of his life; which was one uninterrupted exercise of piety, benevolence, filial affection, and indeed of every virtue which it was in his power to practise. I shall not, with respect to him, adopt a mode of speech which has become too common, and call him my *poor son*: for I must believe, that he is infinitely happy, and that he will be so for ever.

May God grant every blessing to your grace, your family, and all your friends!

The duke of Gordon has done me the honour, according to his wonted and very great humanity, to write me a most friendly and sympathetic letter on this occasion.

I have the honour to be, &c.

James Beattie.

CHAPTER II.

DESCRIPTIVE LETTERS.

LETTER I.

Mr. Gray to Mr. Nicholls.—Description of Southampton, and of a sea view of the rising sun.

November 19, 1764.

Dear sir,

I received your letter at Southampton.—My health is much improved by the sea: not that I drank it, or bathed in it, as common people do; no! I only walked by it, and looked upon it. The climate is remarkably mild at Southampton, even in October and November. No snow has been seen to lie there for these thirty years past. The myrtles grow in the ground against the houses; and Guernsey lilies bloom in every window. The town, clean and well-built, surrounded by old stone walls with their towers and gateways, stands at the point of a peninsula; and opens full south to an arm of the sea, which, having formed two beautiful bays on each hand, stretches away in direct view, till it joins the British Channel: it is skirted on either side with gently-rising grounds, clothed with thick wood; and directly cross its mouth, rise the high lands of the Isle of Wight at distance, but distinctly seen.

In the bosom of the woods, concealed from profane eyes, lie hid the ruins of Nettely abbey. There may be richer and greater houses of religion, but the abbot is content with his situation. See, at the top of that hanging meadow, under the shade of those old trees that bend into a half circle about it, he is walking slowly, and bidding his beads for the souls of his benefactors,

interred in the venerable pile that lies beneath him. Beyond it, the meadow still descending, nods a thicket of oaks that mask the building, and exclude a view too garish and luxuriant; only on either hand they leave an opening to the blue, glittering sea.

From Southampton, I went to Salisbury, Wilton, and Stonehenge: but of these things I say no more; they will be published at the University press.

I must not close my letter without giving you one principal event of my history; which is, that, in the course of my late tour, I set out one morning before five o'clock, the moon shining through a dark and misty autumnal air, and got to the sea-coast time enough to be at the San's levee. I saw the clouds and dark vapours open gradually to the right and left, rolling over one another in great smoky wreathes; and the tide, as it flowed gently in upon the sands, first whitening, then slightly tinged with gold and blue; and, all at once, a little line of insufferable brightness, that, before I can write these few words, was grown to half an orb, and now to a whole one, too glorious to be distinctly seen. It is very odd this makes no figure on paper; yet I shall remember it as long as the sun endures, or at least as long as I endure. I wonder whether any body ever saw it before! I hardly believe it.

I am, &c.

Thomas Gray.

LETTER II.

Miss Seward to Miss Emma ———. Description of Ryam, in Derbyshire.

Lichfield, Feb. 13, 1765.

I wish in vain for a Claudian and Salvatorial pencil to delineate the promised landscape of my native

rocks and hills in Derbyshire. Take it, however, in the best tints of your friend's recollection.

Eyam, though but a village, is near a mile in length, and considerably populous. It sweeps, in a waving line, among the mountains, upon a kind of natural terrace, perhaps a quarter of a mile in breadth. From the stupendous Middleton or Eyam dale, (for the two places contend which of their names it shall bear,) in the road between Buxton and Chatsworth, we ascend to Eyam up a steep and narrow lane, about three hundred yards, and enter near the middle of the village. On the right hand, to its eastern termination, the mountain, in whose bosom it stands; is crossed by another, and still higher mountain.

The top of this eastern elevation, so majestic and picturesque amidst all its barren brownness, presents us, on ascending it, with the eagle's view of several lovely valleys, separated from each other by a number of smaller hills, winding down to the right, along the range of those vales; and, at about four miles' distance, the eye perceives the palace of Chatsworth, rising, in golden beauty, from beneath its dark and pendant woods, which are flanked by a ridge of gray, stony, and bleak mountains. The epithet golden applied to Chatsworth, is, as to appearance, literally just, since the yellowish colour of the beautiful stone of which it is built, and the gilt window frames, make the edifice, even at that distance, when the sun shines upon it, seem as if it were built of pale gold.

The south side of my native mansion, the parsonage, (which stands by the church, in nearly the centre of the village,) looks upon a mountainous knoll, whose surface is always green; the sheep which feed upon it, have made it glossy and smooth as a bowling-turf. From childhood I have delighted to observe, amidst the gradual clearing of a foggy day, the mists which had enveloped

the head of this round and less mountain, rolling away by degrees, and its bright, green summit peeping through them, and imbibing the soft gilding of the sun-beams. Its height, above the village, is moderate. It is called the Cliff; and its top affords a level and lawny walk, of about a hundred and fifty yards' extent, before it descends. The summit overlooks that stupendous Middleton, or, more properly, Eyam dale, so well known to those who make excursions from Buxton. This dale is narrow; and the vast and sterile rocks rise, on each side, to a sublime height. No beauty of wood or field softens the barren grandeur of the scene. It is here that the sterner graces have built their aeries; here that the seasons suffer no visible alteration, except when the craggy steeps are covered with snow, and shoot forth millions of pensile and horrent icicles. The towers and turrets of these lofty rocks are, however, continually growing less and less distinct, picturesque, and noble. They are broken and ravaged from time to time, for the purposes of building, and of making and mending roads; and by the perpetual consumption of the ever-burning lime-kilns.

The middle part of our long-extended village, stands on the brink of a dell, which has different and softer features. It is deep, abrupt, and rocky; still narrower than the savagedale; but grassy and sylvan, the haunt of the vernal linnet, and of the autumnal red-breast. The descent from the village, though extremely steep, is a smooth, green turf, interspersed with the straggling nut-tree, the alder, and the mountain ash. The bottom is scarcely five yards wide, so immediately rise the perpendicular rocks on the opposite side, curtained with wild shrubs, only that a few bare parts appear, in fantastic points, and perforated arches, through which, by glimpses, we catch the horizon. In wet weather, a small rill passes

along the bottom of this dell ; but, in summer, its channel is generally dry, and its pebbles are left to bleach in the sun. Pines wave over the tops of these opposite rocks ; and cliffs and fields descend from them gradually, to the farther and right hand termination of the village, which is considerably higher than its centre.

This grassy dingle curves round to the left, till it meets the sterner and frowning dale, which seems to say to its verdure and its umbrage ; “ Here shall your wanton growth be arrested, dried up, and withered.”

The village of Eyam was one of the last places, (if not the very last place,) in England, visited by the plague in 1666 ; the year after that, in which, in the city of London, Death, on his pale horse, trampled on three thousand victims, in one ghastly night. Mr. Mompesson was then rector of Eyam, and in the vigour of his youth. He had married a beautiful young lady, by whom he had a boy and a girl, of three and four years old. The plague was brought to Eyam, in patterns of cloth sent from London to a tailor in that village. It raged with great violence, and swept away four fifths of the inhabitants.

On the commencement of the contagion, Mrs. Mompesson threw herself, with her babes, at the feet of her husband, to supplicate his flight from that devoted place ; but not even the tears and entreaties of a beloved wife could induce him to desert his flock, in these hours of danger and dismay. Equally fruitless were his persuasions that she would retire with her infants. The result of this pathetic contest was a resolve to remove their children, and abide together the fury of the pestilence.

Mr. Mompesson, constantly visiting the sick, and praying by them,

“ Drew, like Marseilles’ good bishop, purer breath,
When nature sicken’d, and each gale was death.”

From a rational belief, that assembling in the church for public worship, during the summer heats, would spread and increase the infection, he agreed with his afflicted parishioners that he would read prayers to them three times in the week, and deliver his two sermons on the sabbath, from one of the perforated arches in the rocks of the verdant dingle, which I have described. By his directions, they ranged themselves on the grassy declivity, near the bottom, a yard distant from each other; the dell being so narrow, a speaker from that rock might be distinctly heard. Do you not see this dauntless minister of God stretching forth his hands from the rock, and preaching to his alarmed and distressed flock in that little wilderness? How solemn, how pathetic, must have been his exhortations, in those terrific hours!

The church-yard soon ceased to afford room for the dead; they were afterwards buried in a heathy hill above the village. Curious travellers take pleasure in visiting those tumuli, and in examining their yet distinct remains; also in descending from the cliffs, which brow the summit of the dingle, into the excavated rock from which Mr. Mompesson performed divine service, during that awful visitation. The consecrated rock is called Cucklet Church, by the villagers, to this day.

Mr. Mompesson remained in health during the whole time of the contagion; but Providence saw fit to put his fortitude to a severer trial, than if he had seen the plague-spot indurated upon his own body. Amongst other precautions against the disease, Mrs. Mompesson had prevailed upon her husband to suffer an incision to be made in his leg, and kept open. One day she observed appearances in the wound which induced her belief that the contagion had found a vent that way, and that, consequently, the danger was over as to him; the digestion of the sore

being a certain sign of recovery. Instead of being shocked that the pestilence had entered her house, and that her weakness, for she was not in health, must next endure its fury, she expressed the most rapturous gratitude to Heaven for the apprehended deliverance of him, whom more than her life she loved. His letters, though he seems to think her conviction groundless concerning his having taken the disease, make grateful mention of that disinterested joy.

Mrs. Mompesson, however, soon after sickened of the plague, and expired in her husband's arms, in the twenty seventh year of her age. Her monument is now in Eyam church-yard, protected by iron rails, and with the inscription distinct. Her great grand-daughter's pious visit to the tomb of her excellent ancestress, when I was at Eyam with my father in my sixteenth year, proved the commencement of the friendship which subsists between that very accomplished lady and myself.

Upon the first appearance of the pestilence at Eyam, Mr. Mompesson informed the earl of Devonshire, then residing at Chatsworth, that he believed he could prevail upon his parishioners to confine themselves within the limits of the village; provided his lordship would exert himself to induce the country round to supply them with necessaries, leaving such provisions as might be requested, in appointed places, and at appointed hours, upon the neighbouring hills.

The proposal was punctually complied with; and it is most remarkable, that when the pestilence became beyond conception terrible, not a single inhabitant attempted to pass the deathful bounds of the village, though a regiment of soldiers could not, in that rocky and open country, have detained them against their will; much less could any watch, which might have been set by the

neighbourhood, have effected that infinitely important purpose.

By the influence of this exemplary man, the result of his pious and affectionate virtue, the rest of the county of Derby escaped the plague ; not one of the neighbouring towns, hamlets, nor even a single house, being infected beyond the limits of Eyam village, though the distemper remained there more than seven months.

Mr. Mompesson died in the year 1708. His memory ought never to die ; it should be immortal as the spirit which made it worthy to live.

Your heart, I know, will expand over this faithful picture of elevated worth,

“ Of courage that outshines, in its white hue,
The sanguine colour of the soldier’s daring.”

In the summer of 1757, five labouring men, inhabitants of Eyam, were digging amongst the plague graves on the heathy mountain above the village, to make potato-ground for a cottage, which had been built there. They came to something which had the appearance of having once been linen. Conscious of its situation, they instantly buried it again ; but, in a few days, they all sickened of a putrid fever, and three out of the five died. It was so contagious, that the sick could procure no attendance out of their own families. The disease proved mortal to seventy persons of Eyam.

My father, who had two years before been appointed canon of Lichfield, was residing with his family in that city, at the period when the subtle, unextinguished, though much abated power of this superlatively dreadful disease awakened from the dust, in which it had slumbered ninety one years.

Adieu !

Anna Seward.

LETTER III.

Sir William Jones to lady Spencer.—Visit to the residence of Milton.

September 7, 1769.

Madam,

The necessary trouble of correcting the first sheets of my history*, prevented me to-day from paying respect to the memory of Shakspeare, by attending his jubilee. But I was resolved to do all the honour in my power to as great a poet: and I set out in the morning, in company with a friend, to visit a place, where Milton spent some part of his life, and where, in all probability, he composed several of his earliest productions. It is a small village situated on a pleasant hill, about three miles from Oxford, called Forest Hill, because it formerly lay contiguous to a forest, which has since been cut down. The poet chose this place of retirement after his first marriage; and he describes the beauties of his retreat in that fine passage of his "L'Allegro:"

"Sometime walking, not unseen,

By hedge-row elms on hillocks green,

* * * * *

When the ploughman, near at hand,

Whistles o'er the furrow'd land;

And the milkmaid singeth blithe,

And the mower whets his sithe;

And ev'ry shepherd tells his tale,

Under the hawthorn in the dale.

Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures,

Whilst the landscape round it measures:

Russet lawns, and fallows gray,

Where the nibbling flocks do stray;

* His translation, from the Persian, of the life of Nadir Shah.

Mountains, on whose barren breast
The lab'ring clouds do often rest ;
Meadows trim, with daisies pied ;
Shallow brooks, and rivers wide ;
Towers and battlements it sees,
Bosom'd high in tufted trees.

* * * * *

Hard by, a cottage chimney smokes,
From betwixt two aged oaks, &c."

It was neither the proper season of the year, nor the time of the day, to hear all the rural sounds, and to see all the objects, mentioned in this description : but, by a pleasing concurrence of circumstances, we were saluted on our approach to the village, with the music of the mower and his sithe ; we saw the ploughman intent upon his labour, and the milk-maid returning from her country employment.

As we ascended the hill, the variety of beautiful objects, the agreeable stillness and natural simplicity of the whole scene, gave us the highest pleasure. At length, we reached the spot, whence Milton undoubtedly took most of his images : it is on the top of the hill, from which there is a most extensive prospect on all sides. The distant mountains that seemed to support the clouds ; the villages and turrets, partly shaded with trees of the finest verdure, and partly raised above the groves that surrounded them ; the dark plains and meadows of a grayish colour, where the sheep were feeding at large ; in short, the view of the streams and rivers ; convinced us that there was not a single useless or idle word in the above-mentioned description, but that it was a most exact and lively representation of nature. Thus will this fine passage, which has always been admired for its elegance, receive an additional beauty from its exactness.

After we had walked, with a kind of poetical enthusiasm, over this enchanted ground; we returned to the village.

The poet's house was close to the church; the greatest part of it has been pulled down, and what remains, belongs to an adjacent farm. I am informed that several papers in Milton's own hand, were found by the gentleman who was last in possession of the estate. The tradition of his having lived there, is current among the villagers: one of them showed us a ruinous wall that made part of his chamber; and I was much pleased with another, who had forgotten the name of Milton, but recollected him by the title of "The Poet."

It must not be omitted, that the groves near this village are famous for nightingales, which are so elegantly described in "*Il Penseroso*." Most of the cottage windows are overgrown with sweet-briars, vines, and honey-suckles; and that Milton's habitation had the same rustic ornament, we may conclude from his description of the lark bidding him good-morrow,

Through the sweet-briar, or the vine,

Or the twisted eglantine:

for it is evident, that he meant a sort of honey-suckle by the eglantine; though that word is commonly used for the sweet-briar, which he could not mention twice in the same couplet.

If I ever pass a month or six weeks at Oxford in the summer, I shall be inclined to hire and repair this venerable mansion, and to make a festival for a circle of friends, in honour of Milton, the greatest scholar, as well as the sublimest poet, that our country ever produced. Such an honour will be less splendid, but more sincere and respectful, than all the pomp and ceremony on the banks of the Avon.

I have the honour to be, &c.

William Jones.

CHAPTER III.

LETTERS OF PRECEPT AND ADVICE.

LETTER I.

The earl of Strafford's dying advice to his son.

The Tower, May 11, 1641.

My dearest William,

These are the last lines that you will receive from a father who tenderly loves you. I wish I had a greater leisure to impart my mind to you: but, I trust, our merciful God will supply all things by his grace, and guide and protect you in all your ways. To his infinite goodness I bequeath you. Therefore, be not discouraged; serve him, and trust in him, and he will preserve and prosper you.

Be sure you give all respect to my wife, which will well become you, for she has ever had a great love for you. Never be wanting in your care to your sisters, but let them ever be most dear to you; this is a duty that you owe to the memory of your excellent mother and myself. And the like regard you must have to your youngest sister; for, indeed, you owe it to her also, both for her father's and her mother's sake.

Serve God diligently morning and evening; recommend yourself to him; and have him before your eyes in all your ways. Be careful to take the counsel of those friends, whom I have desired to advise you in your education. With patience hear their instructions, and diligently follow their counsel; for, till you have experience in the world, it will be far safer to trust to their judgments than to your own.

Lose not the time of your youth; but gather those

seeds of virtue and of knowledge, which may be of use to yourself, and to your friends, for the rest of your life. And that this may be the better effected, attend to it with patience; and be sure to refrain from anger. Suffer not sorrow to cast you down; but, with cheerfulness and good courage, and in all sobriety and truth go on in the race which you have to run. Be diligent with a hallowed care, to have regard to all the commandments of God: and do not allow yourself to neglect them in the least respect, lest by degrees you come to forget them in the greatest; for the heart of man is deceitful above all things. Perform all your duties and devotions towards God, rather joyfully than pensively, for he loves a cheerful giver. As for your religion, let it be directed by those who are in God's church the proper teachers of it, rather than by your own fancy, or by men who are singular in their opinions, and delight to go in ways of their own finding out: you will certainly find soberness and truth in the one, and much unsteadiness and vanity in the other.

The king, I trust, will deal graciously with you, and restore to you those honours and that fortune, of which a distempered time has deprived you, together with the life of your father: which I rather advise may be by a new gift and creation from himself, than by any other means, in order that you may pay thanks to him, without having obligation to any other.

Be sure you avoid, as much as you can, inquiring after those who have been sharp in their judgments towards me; and I charge you never to suffer a thought of revenge to enter your heart. But be careful to inform yourself who were my friends in this prosecution; and apply yourself to make them your friends also: on them you may rely, and bestow much of your conversation.

God Almighty of his infinite goodness bless you, and your sisters ; perfect you in every good work ; and give you right understandings in all things !

I am your most loving father,

Thomas Wentworth.

You must not fail to behave yourself towards my lady Clare, your grandmother, with all duty and observance, for she loves you most tenderly ; and she has been very kind to me. God reward her for it ! And in this and all the rest, what I counsel you, the same I direct also to your sisters. And once more I do, from my very soul, beseech our gracious God, to bless and govern you ; to save you in the day of his visitation ; and to unite us again in the communion of his blessed saints, where there is fulness of joy and bliss for ever.

LETTER II.

Sir Matthew Hale to his children.—On leading a religious life.

Dear children,

I intended to be at Alderly this Whitsuntide, desirous to renew those counsels which I have often given you, for the everlasting welfare of your souls, and the due ordering of your lives and conversation. Young people are apt, through their own indiscretion, or the ill advice of others, to think such counsels dry and empty, the morose and needless interpositions of old age. But I am persuaded they will find better acceptance from you : and give me leave to tell you, they are of more importance, than external gifts and bounties ; in which, nevertheless, I have not been wanting to you, according to my ability.

Therefore, since I cannot at this time deliver my advice to you in person, I shall do it by a letter ; in which

I shall confine myself to those things only that are of most present use and moment to you. By your due observance of my directions, I shall have a good opinion of your dutifulness to God, your obedience to your father, and also of your discretion and prudence; for it is certain, that as religion is the best means to advance and dignify human nature, so no man can be either truly wise or happy without it, and the love of it, even in this life, much less in that which is to come.

Every morning and every evening, humbly commend yourselves to Almighty God, in prayer; implore his mercy to pardon your sins, his grace to direct you, and his providence to protect you.

Every morning and evening, read seriously and reverently a portion of the Holy Scripture; and acquaint yourselves with the history and doctrine which it contains. It is a book full of light and wisdom; it will make you wise to eternal life; and it will furnish you with directions and principles to guide and order your conduct safely and prudently.

Be strict and religious observers of the Lord's day. Resort to your parish-church twice that day, if your health will permit; and attend diligently and reverently to the public prayers and sermons.—They cannot reasonably expect a blessing from God during the rest of the week, who neglect their duty in the due consecration of this day, to the special service of God, which the day requires.

Be very careful to moderate your passions, especially anger; it inflames the blood, disorders the brain, and, for the time, exterminates not only religion, but common reason.

Receive the blessings of God with much thankfulness to him; for he is the fountain of all the good which you do or can receive.

Bear all afflictions and crosses patiently. The great God of heaven and earth is he who sends them to you, though possibly evil occurrences may be the immediate instruments of them. You owe to Almighty God an infinite subjection and obedience. To expostulate with him is rebellion: and as it is your duty to submit, so it is your wisdom and prudence; impatience will not discharge your yoke, but will make it more galling, and hard to bear.

Learn not only to be patient under your afflictions, but also to improve them. Learn by them how vain and unprofitable the world, and its pleasures, are, which a sharp or a lingering sickness renders utterly tasteless. Learn how weak a thing human nature is, which is brought down to the gates of death, by a little disorder in the blood, in a nerve, in a vein, in an artery. And since you can have so little dependence on a temporal life, which is shaken and shattered by any small occurrence, accident, or distemper; learn to lay hold of eternal life, and of that covenant of peace and salvation, which Christ has brought for all who believe and obey the Gospel. And if you thus improve affliction, you will be the gainers by it; and certainly there is not a more probable way to be delivered from it, (if the wise God see fit,) than thus to improve it. For affliction is a messenger, and it has a voice; and that is, to require mankind to be patient and humble, and to acknowledge Almighty God in all their ways. And if men listen, and conform, to the voice of affliction, it has done its errand; and it will either leave them, or at least give them singular comfort, even under the sharpest sufferings. And sorrow, which is but for a moment, being thus improved, will work for us an exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

I am now on the shady side of three-score years. I

write to you what you have often heard me in substance speak. And possibly when I shall leave this world, you will want such a remembrancer as I have been to you. The words that I now, and at former times, have written to you, are words of truth and soberness; and they proceed from a heart full of love and tenderness to you all. If I should see you act amiss, and not reprove you; or if I should find you want counsel and direction, and not give them to you; I should not discharge the trust of a father. And if you do not thankfully receive my admonitions, you will be defective in the duty which you owe to the Almighty, and to me. May the God of heaven give you wisdom, constancy, and fidelity, in the observance of all my counsels!

I am your ever loving father,

Matthew Hale.

LETTER III.

Sir Matthew Hale to his children.—On conversation.

Dear children,

I thank God I came well to Farrington this day, about five o'clock. And as I have some leisure time at my inn, I cannot spend it more to my own satisfaction and your benefit, than, by a letter, to give you some good counsel. The subject shall be concerning your speech; because much of the good or evil that befalls persons, arises from the well or ill managing of their conversation. When I have leisure and opportunity, I shall give you my directions on other subjects.

Never speak any thing for a truth which you know, or believe, to be false. Lying is a great sin against God, who gave us a tongue to speak the truth, and not falsehood. It is a great offence against humanity itself; for, where there is no regard to truth, there can be no safe so-

cety between man and man. And it is an injury to the speaker: for, besides the disgrace which it brings upon him, it occasions so much baseness of mind, that he can scarcely tell truth, or avoid lying, even when he has no colour of necessity for it; and, in time, he comes to such a pass, that as other people cannot believe he speaks truth, so he himself scarcely knows when he tells a falsehood.

As you must be careful not to lie, so you must avoid coming near it. You must not equivocate; nor speak any thing positively for which you have no authority, but report, or conjecture, or opinion.

Let your words be few, especially when your superiors, or strangers, are present, lest you betray your own weakness and folly; and rob yourselves of the opportunity which you might otherwise have had, to gain knowledge, wisdom, and experience, by hearing those, whom you silence by your impertinent talking.

Be not too earnest, loud, or violent, in your conversation. Silence your opponent, with reason, not with noise.

Be careful not to interrupt another, when he is speaking; hear him out, and you will understand him the better, and be able to give him the better answer.

Consider before you speak, especially when the business is of moment; weigh the sense of what you mean to utter, and the expressions you intend to use, that they may be significant, pertinent, and inoffensive. Inconsiderate persons do not think till they speak; or they speak, and then think.

Some men excel in husbandry; some, in gardening; some, in mathematics. In conversation, learn, as near as you can, where the skill or excellence of any person lies; put him upon talking on that subject, observe what he says, keep it in your memory, or commit it to writing: by this means, you will glean the worth and knowledge of

words of Holy Scripture, do it with reverence, and seriousness; and not lightly, for that is "taking the name of God in vain."

If you hear of any unseemly expressions used in religious exercises, do not publish them; endeavour to forget them; or, if you mention them at all, let it be with pity and sorrow, not with derision or reproach.

Read these directions often; think of them seriously; and practise them diligently. You will find them useful in your conversation; which will be every day the more evident to you, as your judgment, understanding, and experience increase.

I have little further to add at this time, but my wish and command that you will remember the former counsels that I have frequently given you. Begin and end the day with private prayer; read the Scriptures often and seriously; be attentive to the public worship of God. Keep yourselves in some useful employment: for idleness is the nursery of vain and sinful thoughts, which corrupt the mind, and disorder the life. Be kind and loving to one another. Honour your minister. Be not bitter nor harsh to my servants. Be respectful to all. Bear my absence patiently, and cheerfully. Behave as if I were present among you, and saw you. Remember you have a greater Father than I am, who always, and in all places, beholds you, and knows your hearts and thoughts. Study to requite my love, and care, for you, with dutifulness, observance, and obedience; and account it an honour that you have an opportunity, by your attention, faithfulness, and industry, to pay some part of that debt, which, by the laws of nature and of gratitude, you owe to me. Be frugal in my family: but let there be no want; and provide conveniently for the poor.

I pray God to fill your hearts with his grace, fear,

and love, and to let you see the comfort and advantage of serving him ; and that his blessing, and presence, and direction, may be with you, and over you all.

I am your ever loving father,

Matthew Hale.

LETTER IV.

Sir Matthew Hale to one of his sons, on his recovery from a dangerous illness.

Dear son,

Though on account of the contagiousness of your disease, and the many dependents I have upon me, I thought it not convenient to come to you during your sickness, yet I have not been wanting in my earnest prayers to Almighty God for you, nor in using the best means I could for your recovery.

It has pleased God to hear my prayers for you, and to restore you to a competent degree of health ; for which I return him my humble and hearty thanks.—I would have you, as long as you live, remember your late sickness in all its circumstances, and the plain and profitable inferences that arise from it. While afflictions continue, and while deliverances are fresh, they commonly have some good effect upon us. But as the iron is no sooner out of the fire, than it returns to its old coldness and hardness : so when the affliction and deliverance are past, we usually forget them, or attribute them to means and secondary causes ; the good that we should receive from them vanishes ; and we become what we were before. Sick-bed promises are often forgotten when the sickness is over.

Let it be your first business, after your recovery, to consider the course of your past life, since you came to the age of discretion, and see what has been amiss in it :

whether you have not too much neglected religion, and its duties ; been guilty of intemperance, and wantonness ; mispent your time ; and taken delight in vain, sinful, and disorderly company. And if any such, or the like faults, have been committed by you, repent of them ; resolve against them ; and let the future course of your life be amended. I do not mention these things to upbraid you ; but that, upon consideration of what has been amiss, you may be the better enabled to rectify, and set in order, your future life. If this be done, I shall reckon your late sickness one of the greatest blessings that ever befell you.

Keep the fear of God constantly in your heart ; remember that he always sees and notices you ; and order your life as in his presence.

Frequently and thankfully consider the great love of God, in Jesus Christ ; whom he has given to be the instructor, and governor, and sacrifice for the sins, of you and of all mankind ; and through whom, upon repentance, you have assurance of forgiveness, and of eternal life. And consider how great an engagement this is upon you, and all persons, to live according to such a hope and such a mercy.

Every day, read the Holy Scripture. Observe it well ; read it reverently and attentively ; set your heart upon it ; lay it up in your memory ; and make it the direction of your life. I have been acquainted with men and books, and I have had long experience in learning, and in the world. And I can assure you, there is no book like the Bible for excellent learning, wisdom, and use ; and it is want of understanding in those who think or speak otherwise.

Every morning and evening, with all reverence and attention of mind, return hearty thanks to God for his

mercy to you, and particularly for this late deliverance ; desire his grace to enable you to walk, in some measure, answerably to it ; and implore his pardon for your sins.

Observe conscientiously the Lord's day to keep it holy ; avoid recreations, and secular employments and discourse, on that day ; resort twice to the public worship ; go early to it, be attentive at it, keep your eyes and mind from roving after vain thoughts or objects ; and spend the rest of the day, that is free from necessary avocations, in reading the Scriptures, and good books of divinity.*

Be very moderate in eating and drinking. Drunkenness is the great vice of the times. Avoid taverns and alehouses, and all places and companies that are devoted to that beastly vice. Avoid the devices that are used to occasion it. Be resolute against it ; and when your resolution is once known, you will never be solicited to it. I allow you the moderate use of wine and strong drink, at your meals ; I only forbid you excess ; and those places, companies, and artifices, that are temptations to it.

Avoid all wanton and licentious actions, speeches, and company. Read Proverbs ii. 5, 6, 7, 9.

Be frugal of time. It is one of the greatest treasures we have. Shun idleness ; it will consume your time, and lay you open to worse inconveniences. Let your

* Sir Matthew Hale, in another letter to his children, speaking of the sabbath, says : " I have, by long and sound experience, found that the due observance of this day, and of the duties of it, has been of singular comfort and advantage to me ; and I doubt not but it will prove so to you.—Let your actions and speeches be such as the day is, serious and sacred, tending to learn, or to teach, the great business of the knowledge of God, and of his will."

recreations be healthy, and creditable, and moderate, without too much expenditure of time or money. Value time by that estimate which we have of it, when we want it: what would not a sick man give for those portions of it, that he had formerly so improvidently wasted !

Be diligent in your calling. It will be a good employment of your time, and prevent many inconveniences and temptations that otherwise would befall you ; it will furnish you with knowledge ; give you the means and advantage of a plentiful subsistence ; and make you a support, a comfort, and a benefit, to your friends and your country.

Be frugal in your expenses. Live within the compass of your income. Before you spend, ask yourself: "Can I not do well enough without this expense? Is there an absolute necessity for it? Can I not forbear, till I am in a better condition to defray it? If I buy or borrow, am I sure I can pay? and when? Will this expense hold out? How shall I bring about the next quarter, or the next year?"

Be careful not to run into debt. Be content to want things that are not of absolute necessity, rather than to take them upon credit. He who is in debt, usually pays, in the end, a third part more than the principal comes to ; he is in perpetual servitude to his creditors ; and is sometimes obliged even to increase his debts in order to stop their mouths ; he lives uncomfortably ; and he often falls into desperate courses.

The love of fine clothes and new fashions, and the valuing of ourselves upon them, are a most childish piece of folly, and the occasion of great extravagance. Let your apparel be comely, plain, and decent, not curious nor costly. To long for every new fashion, or to think oneself the better for it, or the worse without it, is the sign of a weak head.

Beware of gaming. It makes a man wild, and unsettled ; impatient of an honest calling, or of moderate, lawful gain. It is a vice that seldom goes alone ; debauchery of all kinds commonly accompany it.

Be respectful to all ; familiar with few. Be careful with whom you consort ; and much more careful with whom you become intimate. By conversing with learned, wise, and sober persons, you will gain learning and wisdom, and improve yourself in virtue and goodness.

Consider before you speak. Do not talk at random, or at a venture. Let your words be few, and to the purpose. Be more ready to hear than to talk. Accustom yourself to speak leisurely and deliberately ; this will be a means of making you speak warily and considerately.

Beware of lying : it is displeasing to God, and offensive to man ; and always, in the end, turns to the reproach or disadvantage of him who uses it. Believe not hastily strange news and stories ; and do not report them, though at second hand : for if they prove untrue, (and commonly strange stories prove so,) they will bring an imputation of levity upon him who reports them, and possibly some disadvantage to others.

Take care that you promise nothing but what is just, and lawful, and in your power to perform ; and when you have so promised, be true to your word. Breach of promises and lying are much of the same nature ; they commonly go together ; and they are arguments of a weak and unmanly mind.

Be grateful to your benefactors, especially to those who, under God, were instrumental for your good, in your late sickness, and return thanks to them : to your father, who spared no cost for your recovery ; to your doctor, who was exceedingly diligent about you ; to those

who attended you in your sickness ; and to those who, together with your father, often prayed to God for your recovery, and for a blessing upon this affliction, whose names you shall, in due time, particularly know. But, above all, be grateful to Almighty God, who not only provided and blessed the means, but saved and delivered you, above means, and when means failed.

I shall conclude with one advice more, without the observance of which my labour in writing this long epistle will probably be fruitless : be not wise in your own conceit. Self-conceit is the unhappy error, and often the ruin, of young persons. They are usually rash, giddy, and inconsiderate ; and yet extremely confident in that which they have least reason to trust, namely, their own understanding : which renders them reserved to those who are most willing and able to advise them ; impatient of reproof ; fond of flattery ; and incapable of good and wise counsel, till their follies have reduced them to extreme straits and inconveniences. Suspect, therefore, your own judgment ; advise often with your father, especially in all things of moment ; be glad of his counsel, and be contented and willing to follow it, and to guide your life according to it, at least till ripeness of age, observation, and experience, have enabled you better to advise yourself. This is an easy, ready, and cheap way of attaining wisdom, and avoiding infinite inconveniences.

If I find that my directions are dutifully observed by you, I shall be ready, from time to time, freely to advise and direct you ; and I shall have great assurance that God has blessed this visitation to you. But, on the other hand, if I find that you neglect my counsels ; that you make light of them ; and that you pursue those

courses which will certainly be bitterness in the end ; I shall pray for you, I shall be sorry for you : but I shall not easily be persuaded to give you any more advice or counsel.

The Almighty has not been wanting to you in admonition and correction, in mercy and deliverance ; neither has your father been wanting to you in education and counsel, in care and expense. That God may bless all to you, is the prayer of

Your loving father,

Matthew Hale.

LETTER V.

Dr. Doddridge to a young lady, preparing for a voyage to the East Indies.

Northampton, Feb. 14, 1730.

Madam,

Though I have not the happiness of a personal acquaintance with you, your good mother informed me at large of your character and circumstances ; and it is by her desire that I use a freedom in addressing you, which would not otherwise be pardonable in one who is a stranger. She is tenderly solicitous, that whithersoever you go, the gracious presence of a heavenly Parent, and a pious sense of duty to him, may always accompany you. And as she knows you must resign some of those religious advantages, which you have long enjoyed, she has been urgent with me to put something into your hand, which may be reviewed whenever you please ; and which, by the Divine blessing, may be useful to you, as being peculiarly suited to your present circumstances.

On my part, madam, I undertake the task with a

great deal of cheerfulness; not only to oblige her, who is my valuable friend, but with some encouraging hope, that it may be serviceable to you. I have had many anxious thoughts about you, since your mother and I talked of you; so that you and your affairs are grown very familiar to my mind, and I begin to enter into them with something of a brother's affection.

I hope this concern will sufficiently justify a plainness, which, in such a case, becomes almost unavoidable; and I persuade myself, madam, that when you consider it as proceeding from such a principle, you will not be offended, though I tell you that I almost tremble to think of the variety of dangers to which you are going to be exposed. I am young myself: yet I have already learned by too frequent experience, that, in the morning of life, we naturally delude ourselves with pleasing dreams; we fix our eyes on what is most delightful in a distant prospect; but either entirely overlook what is dangerous and threatening, or at most bestow only a transient glance upon it. You think, no doubt, with a great deal of pleasure, of seeing a variety of new objects in a fine country, vastly different from our own; especially of meeting a brother, whom you have never yet seen, but who, at so remote a distance, has expressed the tenderest regard for you. And you are charmed with the prospect of meeting him, in a place where he knows not any superior; of sharing with him in his plenty and magnificence; and of being treated by all about you with the respect due to a governor's sister. I own there is something very splendid and striking in such a view, and I heartily congratulate you upon it. But let me entreat you, madam, to consider that it is possible you may never reach the country which is to be the scene of so many entertainments. There are unknown hazards

in a voyage to the Indies. Before you have performed half of it, some unexpected event may put a period to these hopes, and to your life. Or, if you reach ———, it is certain that dangers will attend you there; dangers which will be so much the greater as you are the less sensible of them. Our India governors live in a kind of princely grandeur and magnificence; so that you will really need almost as much wisdom and goodness as if you were going to court. You will see a great deal of vanity and pomp, and no doubt a great deal of luxury too, if not in the governor himself, (of whom I hear a very respectable character,) yet in some of his retinue. You will hear a great deal of flattery, the shame of our sex, and the ruin of yours; and the dangers, which conceal the sharpest and the most fatal stings, are those which will accost you with the softest air and the most smiling countenance.

When I consider these things, I am very solicitous with regard to the end of them; and I plainly confess, I cannot but think, that, humanly speaking, there is a great deal of reason to fear lest the lovely flower, which is now opening with so much beauty and fragrancy, should be blasted by too warm a sun, and wither in that luxurious soil to which it will be transplanted. Or, in plainer terms, I fear, (what God forbid!) that the impression of a religious education will wear off from your mind; and the vain allurements of an insnaring world will possess themselves of your heart, till, by insensible degrees, your virtue may be endangered, and your soul ruined. I say not these things, madam, to dissuade you from the voyage. But I represent the case in all its dangerous circumstances, as far as I apprehend them, that you may be awakened to a proper care in providing against them. And here it is evident, that your only security is

in the protection and favour of that God, who has all the seasons and elements under his command, and who, by his secret, but powerful, influence on the mind, can preserve it in the midst of temptation, and brighten it by all its trials.

Therefore, my first advice is, that before you begin this important and doubtful voyage, you set yourself repeatedly to examine into the state of your soul, with regard to God and eternity. It would be doing you a great deal of wrong to suppose you are ignorant of the condition in which the Gospel found us, and of that into which it is intended to bring us. You know the original claim of God upon us, and how far the most innocent and virtuous of us have been from answering it exactly in all its extent. You know something of the fatal consequences which would have attended that revolt, had God treated us with rigorous severity ; though none know them in their full terror. You are acquainted with the gracious method he has taken of recovering us, by a Redeemer, from the ruin of the apostacy, and the way in which the invaluable blessings of the everlasting Covenant are now offered to our acceptance. Let it be your immediate and diligent inquiry, whether you have fallen in with this merciful proposal ; and have resolutely and entirely devoted yourself to God, with a humble dependence on the merits of his Son for your acceptance, and the assistance of his good Spirit to form you to a holy temper, and animate you to the zealous discharge of all the duties which he requires of you. If you have not yet entered yourself into this Covenant, or are dubious whether you have done it or not, let it be your immediate care now to do it with the most serious consideration, as knowing it to be absolutely necessary for your security and happiness in the safest and

most cheering circumstances of life, much more in such as I have now described. Commit your life and your hopes to the providential care of the Lord. Open your heart to the influences of his grace ; and form a determinate resolution that you will be constantly and eternally his ; and that, in the strength of his spirit, neither life nor death shall separate you from him.

When once this is done, you will be happily armed against all the uncertainties of life, and the prospects of death in whatever form it may appear. When thunders roll, and lightnings dart from above, and the waves are foaming and the seas roaring around you ; when the hearts of the most experienced mariner and the most courageous commander are dismayed ; you, madam, with all the tenderness of your age and sex, may sit down with a sweet tranquillity, as the charge and favourite of HIM, who has universal nature under his control ; you may say in the triumphant words of the psalmist : “ God is my refuge and my strength, a very present help in every time of trouble. Therefore, will I not fear, though the sea roar and be troubled : the Lord of hosts is with us ; the God of Jacob is my refuge.” Or, should the dreadful moment of shipwreck come, while ungodly wretches are meeting the first death with unknown agony, as apprehending that it will transmit them to all the terrors of the second, you may smile with a holy transport, when you see the rays of heavenly glory shooting through the gloomy passage ; and, as Mr Howe beautifully expresses it, may “ embrace that friendly wave, which, while you intended —, should land you in Heaven.”

On the other hand, should Providence, according to my most affectionate wishes and repeated prayers, conduct you in safety to your intended harbour, you will be

secure in the midst of temptation ; not indeed in the strength of your own virtue, but in the watchful care of that good Shepherd, who tenderly carries the lambs of the flock in his bosom. Every thing splendid and pleasing which you will meet with at —, instead of alienating your heart from God, may be a means of raising it to him. All the advantages of your circumstances may be improved to the noblest purposes. And you may appear in that conspicuous station, as raised by Providence, to display the charms of your character, and to recommend religion to others ; for it is never seen in a more amiable light than when practised by those who are entering on life, and are surrounded with the allurements of affluence and greatness.

It will indeed be happy for you, and for your dearest friends, if you continue safe in the midst of so many dangers. But you ought not to rest here. I hope God will inspire you with a glorious ambition of adorning your profession by the lustre of uncommon virtue, and of being eminently honourable and useful in life. For your assistance in this noble attempt, I will presume so far on your patience as to offer you some more particular advices, submitting them to your deliberate reflection, that you may judge how far they are necessary or important.

As God is the support of the whole world of his creatures, so, I believe, all who are experimentally acquainted with religion, will readily allow that proper and constant regards to God are the support of all the other branches of it. I would, therefore, exhort you to the most diligent care in maintaining those regards. Let no day pass without some humble and affectionate visits to the throne of grace. Rejoice to think, that whithersoever you go, you are still in a province of that universal empire over which he presides ; and as he is

capable of being your best friend, remember, I entreat you, that neither duty nor prudence will permit you to neglect him. Let secret prayer, and reading the Scriptures, always be attended to with great diligence ; and fix it as a maxim in your mind, that however the outward form may be gone through, these duties are in effect neglected, if they are not seriously and heartily performed.

Thankfully improve all those religious advantages, which, when you arrive at the factory, you may enjoy. I hope Providence will so order it, that you may have the assistance of a clergyman, who will not only be careful to speak the words of truth and soberness, but will, through the whole of his ministry and conversation, be animated by a deep and lively sense of religion, an ardent zeal for the honour of God, and a tender concern for the salvation of souls. But if it should happen otherwise, endeavour to make the best of what you hear ; and carry a few good books with you, which, by the blessing of God, may in part make up for the want of more suitable public assistances. You may then have an opportunity of hearing, as it were, some of the best of our preachers almost every day, and may be secure of meeting with the most valuable of their discourses. Above all, I would most earnestly entreat you to make the Scriptures very familiar to you. It is by these that the young may cleanse their way ; and, in the morning of life, be formed upon maxims of the best and the most important wisdom. David's Psalms, Solomon's Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, and the whole of the New Testament, are the parts of Scripture which I would especially recommend ; and I would entreat you to read them, not in a hasty and cursory manner, but with deep reflection, and earnest prayer to God for the assistance

of his Spirit in the study of them ; and on such a perusal, I am confident, you will find a beauty and a glory in them, beyond what the generality of the world apprehend. This guide alone is incomparably preferable to all the books and the friends upon earth without it. Follow it steadily, and it will lead you to Heaven.

As to your behaviour to your fellow-creatures, the directions of Scripture will be highly serviceable. Your great care, madam, must be to accommodate the general precepts of it to your own particular circumstances of life ; and, to do this, you must beg that God would give you wisdom.

I might insist copiously on these hints, and add many others which would not be foreign to the case before us. But my letter is grown already to a very uncommon size ; and I fear that if I should go on to enlarge it, the review will be a burthensome task. What is still omitted, if I judge right of your character, your own good sense will in a great measure supply, under the directions of God's Word, and the influences of his spirit. And let me only entreat you, often to reflect on your conduct, and to consider your ways ; for I am confident, that the generality of mankind who are undone for time and eternity, perish, not so much for want of knowing what is right, as through a failure of resolution in the pursuit of it, which is very much owing to the neglect of thought and reflection.

I add nothing further but my hearty prayer, which I shall frequently repeat, that a watchful Providence may continually surround you, and give the winds and the seas a charge concerning you ; that the influences of his grace may secure you from all the temptations which you have to encounter, and may make you a lovely example of all the virtues and graces of Christianity ; that,

after a safe, honourable, and prosperous visit to the Indies, you may be restored to your native land in peace, with a rich increase both of temporal and spiritual blessings: so that, upon the whole, your present and future happiness may exceed all that we can particularly wish or pray for on your account.

I am, dear madam,

your affectionate friend,

and obedient, humble servant,

Philip Doddridge.

LETTER VI.

Dr. Hawkesworth to a young lady leaving school.

Bromley, Dec. 14, 1748.

Dear madam,

You are now going from the company, the conversation, and the amusements of children, into a scene of life which affords more rational pleasures, and which will engage you in more important pursuits.—The world is opening before you; a wilderness in which many have been lost, and in which, among a thousand broad ways, there is but one narrow path that leads to happiness and honour. It is of great consequence to you to be directed into this path at first; for if you should miss it at setting out, you will find great difficulty in recovering it.—I hope you will be long under the protection and guidance of parents, in whom there is all that can be wished in the relation; yet my affection for you induces me to give you a few plain instructions, which, I trust, will assist you in fulfilling your duty to them, in obtaining the good will of others, and in promoting your own welfare.

Do not imagine that I think you inclined to every fault and folly that I shall warn you against: but you

must remember, that we all have faults and follies ; and that to caution persons while they are innocent, may spare them the shame and anguish of being reprov'd or upbraided after they are guilty.

Great part of the happiness of every individual depends upon the opinion and actions of others ; it is therefore, desirable for you to gain and preserve the good will of all with whom you are connected. Your regard and attention to them, will seldom fail to secure theirs to you. Be always ready to perform such acts of kindness as are in your power ; taking care to avoid a partiality, which may lead you to do any thing in favour of one person, at the expense of another, or of yourself.

There are many acts of kindness to mankind in general, which are neither difficult, troublesome, nor expensive. The principal of these is, speaking well, or at least not speaking ill, of the absent. If you see a fault in another, do not make it the subject of conversation. Do not think yourself justified by saying, that what you report to another's disadvantage is true. If all the real failings of the best of us, were to be told to our dearest friend, perhaps all our virtues could scarcely secure his esteem. But this rule must not extend to the concealing of any thing by which another may be injured in his property or character, if by revealing it the evil may be prevented ; and this is almost the only instance in which we are allowed to speak of the faults of others.

Be always punctual in returning what the world calls civilities. The failing in this, however trifling, is often taken for contempt, or at least for want of esteem ; and I have known the omitting to return a visit, or to answer a letter, in due time, attended with coldness, indifference, and worse consequences. That persons ought not to set such a value on these trifles, is true ; but, if they do, it

behooves us to act conformably. However, as the resenting of a breach of these punctilios is really a fault, take care that you are not betrayed into it. Mere negligences should be below your resentment; though, for the sake of the infirmities of others, you should guard against them in yourself.

There are two ways of gaining the good will of the world, which weak people practise, because they know no other: one is flattery; the other is lavish professions of friendship, which begin and end on the lips. Never stoop to either of these low and infamous arts: whatever is thus gained, is bought too dear. To refrain from this fault is easy: but to guard against the ill effects of it in others, is difficult; it is not, however, more difficult than necessary. Always suspect that a person who flatters you, endeavours to gain a confidence which he intends to betray.

Remember, that whoever makes professions of friendship which are not sincere, is a hypocrite; and beware that your own vanity does not encourage you to think that you have merited uncommon and excessive instances of favour, and zeal to serve you. But the constant, steady esteem and friendship of a person long tried and well known, who has obtained a reputation for virtue and sincerity, is an invaluable treasure: if you can find it, preserve it with a religious care, and return it with fidelity and zeal.

Never be trusted with the secrets of others, if you can by any means avoid it with decency; reject it, as an enemy to your peace, and as a snare for your good name. Whoever tells you a secret, usually tells it to many others; at length, it is betrayed; and, as this breach of faith is always denied by the guilty, the innocent are generally suspected. It has been thought good

advice not to reveal our own secrets ; but I would rather advise you to have none. Do nothing that, if known, would wound your reputation, or fill your bosom with shame and regret. To lie at the mercy of accident ; to be obliged constantly to watch over our words and actions, lest what we wish to hide should be discovered ; is the life of a slave, full of fear, suspicion, and anxiety. Those who have nothing to apprehend but falsehood and detraction, enjoy their own innocence, have an open look, a noble confidence, and a native cheerfulness.

If, upon some difference, you should happen to lose any of your intimate acquaintance, do not be eager to relate the circumstances of the quarrel, in order to justify your conduct and condemn theirs. Those stories, which a thousand little circumstances make of importance to you, and warm your mind in the recital, are insipid to other persons ; and, while you think you amuse them, and are rising into consequence, by a detail of your own prudent management, you will become tiresome, impertinent, and ridiculous. If the party with whom you have differed, should pursue this method, the wiser part of mankind will rather conclude them to be in fault, from their zeal to defend themselves, than you from your silence ; for it is a consciousness that others will condemn us ; which makes us eager to anticipate their judgment. — This rule extends to your talking of yourself and of your private affairs, on every occasion, except when it has some pertinent relation to the discourse of the company, or when it is necessary to obtain some valuable purpose.

As to your behaviour at home, keep yourself always above the servants : your station is above theirs ; and all persons should act suitably to their station. But do

not think I mean that you should treat them haughtily, or look upon the lowest of them with contempt; that you should put on a commanding air, or speak to them in a peremptory tone: this would be most effectually to lose the superiority of your situation, and to become despised and hated by those who ought to regard you with respect and esteem. My meaning is, that you should treat them courteously, but permit no unbecoming familiarity. Never suffer yourself to be made their confidant in any thing that they would conceal from their master and mistress; decline the conversation, but without any frowning looks or harsh language. Avoid also the opposite extreme: do not watch their most trivial actions as a spy, nor report every little misdemeanour which falls under your observation, with the low pleasure and petty officiousness of an informer. Never steal the knowledge of what passes between them, when they think they are alone, by secretly listening with a vain or malevolent curiosity. What you overhear by such means may probably do you more harm, than any thing which may be thus discovered can do you good. If your mother should delegate part of her authority to you, in the management of the household affairs, use it with moderation, and give orders rather in her name than your own: you will then be obeyed, without seeming to assume command, or to value yourself upon it.

If your father or mother should at any time express a disapprobation of your conduct, immediately resolve to amend it, apologize for the past, and promise for the future; never seem in haste to justify yourself. Even if you should think that the displeasure of your parents is unmerited, (in which it is a thousand to one but you will be mistaken,) be sure to avoid, on the one hand, all pert and self-sufficient replies, and, on the other, all

sullen looks and dumb resentment. If it should happen that a harsh expression escapes them, when their temper is ruffled by the perplexing accidents and disappointments of life, it would be the highest ingratitude and indecency in you to express impatience or discontent : and, as the reward of a contrary conduct, their own reflections upon what is past, when their minds are calm, will be in your favour ; and their affection will seek an opportunity of compensating your uneasiness. You should regard these accidents as opportunities of endearing yourself to them, and as tests of your prudence, duty, and affection. What may not children expect from a father, who is a friend to the whole circle of his acquaintance ! It is your happiness to have such a father : think yourself secure, from his affection, of every thing that is fit for you, and do not anticipate his bounty by your requests. Both his pleasure and yours will be lessened, if you receive because you ask, and he gives because he cannot deny you. How very shameful, then, is the common triumph of favourites, for having obtained by importunity what is denied to merit, and withheld by prudence ! Whatever is thus gained from the hand, is lost in the heart. I have seen, with grief and resentment, every tender moment watched, to urge a request, and wrest a promise, from the generous weakness of unguarded affection. How mean and selfish is such a practice ! Remember, that a noble mind will dispose a person to suffer much, rather than ask a favour which he knows cannot be refused, if he thinks that his friend may have reason to wish it had not been asked.

I shall finish this long letter with some advice of yet higher importance.—If you succeed in every design which you form, and the world favour you, till its utmost bounty is exhausted, your happiness will be still imperfect: you will find some desire unsatisfied ; and pos-

session will never fill your wishes. But do not suffer the present hour to pass away unenjoyed, by an earnest and anxious desire of some future good: for, if this weakness be indulged, your happiness will still fly from you as you pursue it; and there will be the same distance between you and the object of your wishes, till all the visions of imagination shall vanish, and your progress to further degrees of temporal advantage shall be stopped by the grave. It is notwithstanding true, that the expectation of future good, if the object is worthy of a rational desire, pleases more than any present enjoyment. You will, therefore, find that a well-grounded hope of Heaven will give a relish to whatever you shall possess upon earth. If there is no futurity, that we can anticipate with pleasure, we regret every moment that passes; we see that time is flying away with all our enjoyments; that youth is short, health precarious, and age approaching, loaded with infirmities to which death only can put an end. For this reason, endeavour to secure an interest in the favour of God, which will ensure to you an everlasting life of uninterrupted and inconceivable felicity. Nor is this a difficult or an unpleasing attempt; no real present happiness needs be forfeited to purchase the future; for virtue and piety at once secure every blessing, both in time and eternity.

I recommend to you the frequent perusal of this letter. As the world opens to you, I believe you will see the reason and the use of all the directions which I have given you. If they assist you, in any degree, to pass through life with safety and reputation, I shall think my labour well bestowed.

I am, dear madam,
your affectionate friend,

John Hawkesworth.

LETTER VII.

*The earl of Chatham to his nephew, Thomas Pitt, esq.
(afterwards lord Camelford,) at Cambridge.*

Bath, Jan. 12, 1754.

My dear nephew,

Your letter from Cambridge affords me many very sensible pleasures. First, that you are, at last, in a proper place for study and improvement, instead of losing, in London, any more of that most precious thing, time. Secondly, that you seem pleased with the particular society you are placed in, and with the gentleman to whose care and instruction you are committed. And above all, I applaud the sound, right sense, and the love of virtue, which appear through your whole letter.

You are already possessed of the true clue to guide you through the years of education, in the maxim you lay down, namely, that the use of learning is, to render a man more wise and virtuous, not merely to make him more learned. Go on, my dear boy, by this golden rule, and you cannot fail to become every thing that your heart prompts you to wish to be, and that mine most affectionately wishes for you. There is but one danger in your way; and that is, perhaps, natural enough to your age, the love of pleasure, or the fear of close application and laborious diligence. With the last, there is nothing you may not conquer: and the first is sure to conquer and enslave every person, who does not strenuously and generously resist the first allurements of it, lest by small indulgences, he fall under the yoke of irresistible habit. “*Vitanda est improba Siren, Desidia,*” I desire may be affixed to the curtains of your bed, and to the walls of your chambers. If you do not

rise early, you never can make any progress worth mentioning. If you do not set apart your hours of reading; if you suffer yourself, or any one else, to break in upon them; your days will slip through your hands, unprofitably and frivolously, unpraised by all you wish to please, and really unenjoyed by yourself. Be assured, whatever you take from pleasure, amusements, or indolence, for these first few years of your life, will repay you a hundred fold, in the pleasures, honours, and advantages, of all the remainder of your days.—You are to qualify yourself for the part in society, to which you are called by your birth and estate. You are to be a gentleman of such learning and accomplishments, as may hereafter distinguish you in the service of your country; not a pedant, who reads only to be called learned, instead of considering learning as an instrument of action.

I have not the pleasure of knowing the gentleman who is your tutor; but I dare say he is every way equal to such a charge, which I think no small one. I hope he will concur with me, as to the course of study I desire you may begin with; and that such books, and such only, as I have pointed out, may be read.

Believe me, my dear nephew,

With true affection,

Ever yours,

Chatham.

LETTER VIII.

*The earl of Chatham to his nephew, Thomas Pitt, esq.
(afterwards lord Camelford,) at Cambridge.*

Bath, Jan. 14, 1754.

My dear nephew,

I intended to write to you soon: but I do it the sooner on account of your letter to your aunt, which she transmitted to me.

If any thing, my dear boy, could have happened, to raise you higher in my esteem, and to endear you more to me, it is the abhorrence you feel for the scene of vice and folly, and of real misery and perdition, (under the false notion of pleasure and spirit,) which has opened to you at your college; and, at the same time, the generous and wise resolution, and true spirit, with which you resisted and repulsed the first attempts upon a mind, I thank God, infinitely too firm and noble, as well as too elegant and enlightened, to be in any danger of yielding to such contemptible and wretched corruptions.

You charm me with the description of Mr. Wheeler. Cultivate the acquaintance with him which you have so fortunately begun. In general, be sure to associate with men much older than yourself; scholars whenever you can; but always with men of decent and honourable lives. As their age and learning, both superior to your own, must necessarily entitle them to deference, and to the submission of your own lights to theirs, you will learn that first and greatest rule for pleasing in conversation, as well as for drawing instruction and improvement from the company of superiors in age and knowledge: namely, to be a patient, attentive, and well-bred hearer, and to answer with modesty; to deliver your own opinion sparingly, and with becoming diffidence; to request, when necessary, farther information or explanation on any point, with proper apologies for the trouble you give; or, if obliged to differ, to do it with all possible candour, and an unprejudiced desire to find and ascertain truth, with an entire indifference to the side on which that truth is to be found. Pythagoras enjoined his scholars an absolute silence through a long novitiate. I am far from approving such taciturnity. But I highly recommend the intent of Pythagoras's in-

junction : which is, to dedicate the first parts of life to hear and to learn, in order to collect materials, out of which to form well-founded opinions, and sound principles ; and not to be presuming, prompt, and flippant, in hazarding slight, crude notions of things, and, by that means, expose the nakedness and emptiness of the mind, like a house opened to company before it is furnished either with necessaries, or with ornaments, for their reception and entertainment. And not offly will this disgrace follow from such temerity and presumption, but a more serious danger is likely to ensue ; which is, the embracing of errors for truths, prejudices for principles : and when that is once done, the adhering to them, only because one has declared for them ; and the submitting, for life, of the understanding and the conscience to a yoke of base and servile notions, vainly taken up, and obstinately retained. This will never be your danger ; but I thought it not amiss to offer these reflections to your mind.

As to your manner of behaving towards the unhappy young gentlemen you describe, let it be manly and easy ; decline their parties with civility ; retort their raillery with raillery, always tempered with good breeding. If they banter your regularity, order, decency, and love of study, banter, in return, the opposite qualities in them ; and venture to own frankly, that you came to Cambridge, to learn what you can, not to follow what they call pleasure.

I come now to the part of the advice I have to offer you, which most nearly concerns your welfare, and upon which every good and honourable purpose of your life will assuredly turn ; I mean the keeping up in your heart true sentiments of religion. If you are not right towards God, you can never be so towards man. The

noblest feeling of the human heart is here brought to the test. Is gratitude in the number of a man's virtues? If it is, the highest Benefactor demands the warmest returns of gratitude, love, and praise. If a man wants this virtue, where there are infinite obligations to excite and quicken it, he will be likely to want all others towards his fellow-creatures; whose utmost gifts are poor, compared to those which he daily receives at the hands of his never failing Almighty Friend. "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth," is a maxim big with the deepest wisdom. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;" and "to depart from evil is understanding." This is eternally true, whether the wits and rakes of Cambridge allow it or not; nay, I must add of this religious wisdom, that, "her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace," whatever your young gentlemen of pleasure think. Hold fast, therefore, by this sheet-anchor of happiness, Religion: you will often want it in the times of most danger; the storms and tempests of life. Cherish true religion; shun, with abhorrence and contempt, superstition and enthusiasm. The first is the perfection and glory, the two last are the depravation and disgrace, of human nature. Remember the essence of religion, is, "a heart void of offence towards God and man;" not subtle, speculative opinions, but an active, vital principle of faith.

Go on, my dear child, in the admirable dispositions you have towards all that is right and good.—I have neither paper nor words to tell you, how tenderly

I am yours,

Chatham.

LETTER IX.

Dr. Schomberg to a lady.—On reading.

Madam,

Conformably to your desire, and my promise, I present you with a few thoughts on a method of reading ; which you would have had sooner, only that you gave me leave to set them down at my leisure hours. If my remarks should answer your expectations ; if they should conduce to the spending of your time in a more profitable and agreeable manner, than most of your sex generally spend theirs ; it will give me a pleasure equal at least to that which you will receive.

It is to be wished that the female part of the human creation, on whom nature has poured so many charms with so lavish a hand, would pay some regard to the cultivation of their minds, and the improvement of their understandings. This might easily be accomplished. Would they bestow a fourth part of the time, in reading proper books, which they throw away on the trifles and gewgaws of dress, it would perfectly answer the purpose. Not that I am against the ladies adorning their persons : but let it be done with reason and good sense, not caprice and humour ; for there is good sense in dress as in all things else. Strange doctrine to some ! but I am sure, madam, you know there is : you practise it.

The most important rule to be laid down to any one who reads for improvement, is, never to read but with attention.

As abstruse learning is not necessary for the accomplishment of one of your sex, a small degree of it will suffice. The subjects which I would particularly recommend to you, I will throw under the following heads : history, morality, and poetry. The first employs

the memory ; the second, the judgment ; and the third, the imagination.

Whenever you undertake to read history, make a small abstract of the memorable events, and set down in what year they happened. If you entertain yourself with the life of a famous person, do the same with respect to his most remarkable actions; adding the year and the place of his birth and death. You will find this method a great help to your memory, as it will lead you to remember what you do not write down, by a sort of chain that links the whole history together.

Books on morality deserve an exact reading. There are none in our language more useful and entertaining than the Spectators, Tatlers, and Guardians. They are the standards of the English tongue; and, as such, they should be read over and over again: for as we imperceptibly slide into the manners and habits of those persons, with whom we most frequently converse; so, reading being, as it were, a silent conversation, we insensibly write and talk in the style of the authors, whom we have most frequently read, and who have left the deepest impressions on our mind. Now, in order to retain what you read on the various subjects that fall under the head of morality, I would advise you to mark with a pencil whatever you find particularly worth remembering. If a passage should strike you, mark it in the margin; if an expression, draw a line under it; if a whole paper in the forementioned books, or any others which are written in the same loose and unconnected manner, make an asterisk over the first line. By these means you will select the most valuable parts; which, by being distinguished from the rest, will, on repeated reading, sink deeper in your memory.

The last article is poetry. To distinguish good

poetry from bad, turn it out of verse into prose, and see whether the thought is natural, and the words are adapted to it ; or whether they are not too big and sounding, or too low and mean for the sense which they would convey. This rule will prevent you from being imposed on by bombast and fustian, which, with many, pass for sublime : smooth verses that run off the ear with an easy cadence and harmonious turn, very often impose nonsense on the world, and are like your fine dressed beaux, who pass for fine gentlemen. Divest both of their outward ornaments, and people are surprised that they could have been so easily deluded.

I have now, madam, given you a few rules : I could have added more ; but these will be sufficient to enable you to read without burthening your memory, and yet with another view besides that of barely killing time, as too many are accustomed to do. * The task you have

* " Many people," says an ingenious writer, " lose a great deal of time by reading : for they read absurd romances, where characters that never existed, are insipidly displayed, and sentiments that were never felt, are pompously described ; and such sort of idle, frivolous stuff, that nourishes and improves the mind, just as much as whipped cream would the body. Adhere to the best established books in every language ; the celebrated poets, historians, orators, and philosophers. By these means, (to use a city metaphor,) you will make *fifty per cent.* of that time, of which others do not make above three or four, or probably nothing at all.—Lay down a method for your reading ; and allot to it a certain share of your time. Let it be in a consistent and consecutive course, and not in that desultory manner, in which many people read scraps of different authors, upon different subjects.—Never read history without having maps, and a chronological book or tables, lying by you, and constantly recurred to ; without which, history is a confused heap of facts.—At your spare moments, take up a good book of rational amusement, and detached pieces ; as Horace, Boileau, La Bruyere, &c. This will be so much time saved, and by no means ill employed."

imposed on me, is a strong proof of your knowing the true value of time, and having improved it; and that there are other proofs, those who have the pleasure of being acquainted with you can tell.

Believe me to be, with the utmost sincerity, as I really am, madam,

Your faithful, humble servant,

Isaac Schomberg.

LETTER X.

John Dunning, esq. to a young gentleman of the Inner Temple.

Lincoln's-Inn, March 3, 1779.

Dear sir,

The habits of intercourse in which I have lived with your family, joined to the regard which I entertain for yourself, make me solicitous, in compliance with your request, to give you some hints concerning the study of the law.

Our profession is generally ridiculed as being dry and uninteresting; but a mind anxious for the discovery of truth and information, will be amply gratified for the toil, in investigating the origin and progress of a jurisprudence, which has the good of the people for its basis, and the accumulated wisdom and experience of ages for its improvement. Nor is the study itself so intricate as has been imagined; especially since the labours of some modern writers have given it a more regular and scientific form. Without industry, however, it is impossible to arrive at any eminence in practice; and the man who shall be bold enough to attempt excellence by abilities alone, will soon find himself foiled by many, who have inferior understandings, but better attainments.

I imagine that a considerable degree of learning is

absolutely necessary. The elder authors frequently wrote in Latin, and the foreign jurists continue the practice to this day. Besides, classical attainments contribute much to the refinement of the understanding, and to the embellishment of the style. The utility of grammar, rhetoric, and logic, is known and felt by every one. Geometry will afford the most apposite examples of close and pointed reasoning; and geography is of so much use in common life, that there is less credit in knowing it, than dishonour in being unacquainted with it. But it is history, and more particularly that of his own country, which will occupy the attention, and attract the regard, of the great lawyer. A minute knowledge of the political revolutions, and of the judicial decisions of our predecessors, whether in the more ancient or modern eras of our government, is equally useful and interesting. This will include a narrative of all the material alterations in the common law, and the reasons of them.

I would always recommend a diligent attendance on the courts of justice; as by that means, the practice of them, (a circumstance of great moment,) will be easily and naturally acquired. A much stronger impression will be made on the mind by the statement of the case, and the pleadings of the counsel, than by a cold, uninteresting detail of them, in a report. But above all, a trial at bar, or a special argument, should never be neglected. It is usual on these occasions to take notes; a knowledge of short-hand will give such facility to your labours, as to enable you to follow the most rapid speaker with certainty and precision. Common-place books are convenient and useful; and as they are generally lettered, a reference may be had to them in a moment. It is usual to acquire some insight into real business, under an

eminent special pleader, previous to actual practice at the bar : this idea I beg leave strongly to second ; and, indeed, I have known but a few great men who have not possessed this advantage.

I subjoin a list of books necessary for your perusal and instruction ; to which I have annexed some remarks. Wishing that you may add to a successful practice, that integrity which can alone make you worthy of it, I remain &c.

John Dunning.

LETTER XI.

Dr. Horne (afterwards bishop of Norwich) to a young clergyman.

Dear ———,

I am much pleased to hear that you have been for some time stationary at Oxford ; a place where a man may best prepare himself, to go forth as a burning and shining light, into a world, where charity is waxed cold, and where truth is nearly obscured. Whenever it pleases God to appoint you to the government of a parish, you will find work enough to employ you. Therefore, before that time comes, you should be careful to provide yourself with all necessary knowledge ; lest, by and by, when you ought to be building, you should have your materials to look for, and to bring together. Besides, the habit of studying and thinking, if it is not acquired in the first part of life, rarely comes afterwards. For want of spiritual exercises, a man is miserably drawn into the eddy of a worldly dissipation, and knows not how to get out of it again ; the faculties of his soul are benumbed ; and he sinks into indolence, till “ the night cometh, when no man can work.” Happy, therefore, is he, who betimes acquires a relish for holy solitude,

and accustoms himself in his youth, to bear the yoke of Christ's discipline : who can sit alone, and keep silence, and seek Wisdom diligently where she may be found, in the Scriptures of faith, and in the writings of the Saints : who, from these flowers of Paradise, extracts the honey of knowledge and divine love, and with it fills every cell of his understanding and affections ! The winter of affliction, disease, and old age, will not surprise such a one in an unprepared state. He will not be confounded in the perilous time ; and in the days of dearth, he will have enough to strengthen, comfort, and support, him and his brethren.

Precious beyond rubies are the hours of youth and health ! Let none of them pass unprofitably away : for surely they make to themselves wings ; and they are as a bird cutting swiftly the air, and the trace of her can no more be found. If well-spent, they fly to Heaven with news that rejoices angels ; and they meet us again, as witnesses for us, at the tribunal of our Lord. When the graces of time run into the glories of eternity, how trifling will the labour seem, that has, through grace, procured us everlasting rest : for which the apostles toiled night and day, and the martyrs " loved not their lives unto death !"

These, my dear ———, are my sentiments : would to God that my practice were more conformable to them than it is, that I might be less unworthy to advise and exhort others ! But, I trust, that the persuasion I have of the truth of what is said above, (which every day's experience more and more confirms,) will influence my conduct in this particular, and make me more watchful in time to come. In the mean season, I cannot forbear pressing the same upon you, as I should do with my dying breath ; since upon the due proportioning and em-

ploying of our time, all our progress in grace and knowledge depends.

If there be any thing with regard to the choice or matter of your studies in which I can assist you, let me know, as you can have no doubt of my being, in all things,

Most affectionately yours,

George Horne.

CHAPTER IV.

LETTERS OF ADMONITION AND EXPOSTULATION.

LETTER I.

Sir William Temple to the countess of Essex.—On the excess of her grief occasioned by the loss of her only daughter.

Sheen, Jan. 29, 1674.

The honour, which I received by a letter from your ladyship, was too great not to be acknowledged ; yet I doubted whether that occasion could bear me out in the confidence of giving your ladyship any further trouble. But I can no longer forbear, on account of the sensible wounds that have so often of late been given your friends here, by the desperate expressions in several of your letters, respecting your temper of mind, your health, and your life ; in all which, you must allow them to be extremely concerned. Perhaps none can be, at heart, more partial than I am to whatever regards your ladyship, nor more inclined to defend you on this very occasion, how unjust and unkind soever you are to yourself. But when you throw away your health, or your life, so great a remainder of your own family, and so great hopes of that into which you are entered, and all by a desperate melancholy, upon an event past remedy, and to which all the mortal race is perpetually subject ; give me leave to tell you, madam, that what you do is not at all consistent either with so good a Christian, or so reasonable and great a person, as your ladyship appears to the world in all other lights.

I know no duty in religion more generally agreed on, nor more justly required by God Almighty, than a

perfect submission to his will in all things ; nor do I think any disposition of mind can either please him more, or become us better, than that of being satisfied with all he gives, and contented with all he takes away. None, I am sure, can be of more honour to God, nor of more ease to ourselves. For if we consider him as our Maker, we cannot contend with him ; if as our Father, we ought not to distrust him : so that we may be confident, whatever he does, is intended for good ; and whatever happens that we interpret otherwise, yet we can get nothing by repining, nor save any thing by resisting.

But if it were fit for us to reason with God Almighty, and your ladyship's loss were acknowledged as great as it could have been to any one ; yet, I doubt, you would have but ill grace to complain at the rate you have done, or rather as you do : for the first emotions or passions, may be pardoned ; it is only the continuance of them which makes them inexcusable. In this world, madam, there is nothing perfectly good ; and whatever is called so, is but either comparatively with other things of its kind, or else with the evil that is mingled in its composition : so, he is a good man who is better than men commonly are, or in whom the good qualities are more than the bad ; so, in the course of life, his condition is esteemed good, which is better than that of most other men, or in which the good circumstances are more than the evil. By this measure, I doubt, madam, your complaints ought to be turned into acknowledgments ; and your friends would have cause to rejoice, rather than to condole, with you. When your ladyship has fairly considered how God Almighty has dealt with you, in what he has given, you may be left to judge yourself how you have dealt with him, in your complaints for what he has

taken away. If you look about you, and consider other lives as well as your own, and what your lot is, in comparison with those that have been drawn in the circle of your knowledge ; if you think how few are born with honour, how many die without name or children, how little beauty we see, how few friends we hear of, how much poverty, and how many diseases, there are in the world ; you will fall down upon your knees, and, instead of repining at one affliction, will admire so many blessings as you have received at the hand of God.

To put your ladyship in mind of what you are, and of the advantages which you have, would look like a design to flatter you. But this I may say, that we will pity you as much as you please, if you will tell us who they are whom you think, upon all circumstances, you have reason to envy. Now if I had a master who gave me all I could ask, but thought fit to take one thing from me again, either because I used it ill, or gave myself so much over to it, as to neglect what I owed to him, or to the world ; or perhaps because he would show his power, and put me in mind from whom I held all the rest : would you think I had much reason to complain of hard usage, and never to remember any more what was left me, never to forget what was taken away ?

It is true, you have lost a child, and all that could be lost in a child of that age : but you have kept one child, and you are likely to do so long ; you have the assurance of another, and the hopes of many more. You have kept a husband, great in employment, in fortune, and in the esteem of good men. You have kept your beauty and your health, unless you have destroyed them yourself, or discouraged them to stay with you by using them ill. You have friends who are as kind to you as you can wish, or as you can give them leave to be. You have

honour and esteem from all who know you ; or if ever it fails in any degree, it is only upon that point of your seeming to be fallen out with God and the whole world, and neither to care for yourself, nor any thing else, after what you have lost.

You will say, perhaps, that one thing was all to you, and your fondness of it made you indifferent to every thing else. But this, I doubt, will be so far from justifying you, that it will prove to be your fault, as well as your misfortune. God Almighty gave you all the blessings of life ; and you set your heart wholly upon one, and despise or undervalue all the rest : is this his fault or yours ? nay, is it not to be very unthankful to Heaven, as well as very scornful to the rest of the world ? is it not to say, because you have lost one thing God has given, you thank him for nothing he has left, and care not what he takes away ? is it not to say, since that one thing is gone out of the world, there is nothing left in it which you think can deserve your kindness or esteem ? A friend makes me a feast, and places before me all that his care or kindness could provide : but I set my heart upon one dish alone, and, if that happens to be thrown down, I scorn all the rest ; and though he sends for another of the same kind, yet I rise from the table in a rage, and say ; “ My friend is become my enemy, and he has done me the greatest wrong in the world.” Have I reason, madam, or good grace, in what I do ? or would it become me better to eat of the rest that is before me, and think no more of what had happened, and could not be remedied ?

Christianity teaches and commands us to moderate our passions ; to temper our affections towards all things below ; to be thankful for the possession, and patient under the loss whenever HE who gave shall see fit to

take away. Your extreme fondness was perhaps as displeasing to God before, as now your extreme affliction is ; and your loss may have been a punishment for your faults in the manner of enjoying what you had. It is at least pious to ascribe all the ill that befalls us to our own demerits, rather than to injustice in God. And it becomes us better to adore the issues of his Providence in the effects, than to inquire into the causes: for submission is the only way of reasoning between a creature and its Maker ; and contentment in his will is the greatest duty we can pretend to, and the best remedy we can apply to all our misfortunes.

But, madam, though religion were no party in your case, and, for so violent and injurious a grief, you had nothing to answer to God, but only to the world and yourself ; yet I very much doubt how you would be acquitted. We bring into the world with us a poor, needy, uncertain life ; short at the longest, and unquiet at the best. All the imaginations of the witty and the wise have been perpetually busied to find out the ways to revive it with pleasures, or to relieve it with diversions ; to compose it with ease, and settle it with safety. To these ends have been employed the institutions of lawgivers, the reasonings of philosophers, the inventions of poets, the pains of labouring, and the extravagances of voluptuous men. All the world is perpetually at work, that our poor mortal lives may pass the easier and happier for that little time we possess them, or else end the better when we lose them. On this account, riches and honours are coveted, friendship and love pursued, and the virtues themselves admired in the world. Now, madam, is it not to bid defiance to all mankind, to condemn their universal opinions and designs, if instead of passing your life as well and easily, you resolve to pass

it as ill and miserably, as you can? You grow insensible to the conveniences of riches, the delights of honour and praise, the charms of kindness or friendship, nay to the observance or applause of virtues themselves: for, who can you expect, in these excesses of passions, will allow that you show either temperance or fortitude, either prudence or justice? and as for your friends, I suppose you reckon upon losing their kindness, when you have sufficiently convinced them they can never hope for any of yours, since you have none left for yourself, or any thing else.

Passions are, perhaps, the stings, without which, it is said, no honey is made. Yet I think all sorts of men have ever agreed, they ought to be our servants, and not our masters; to give us some agitation for entertainment or exercise, but never to throw our reason out of its seat. It is better to have no passions at all, than to have them too violent; or such alone, as, instead of heightening our pleasures, afford us nothing but vexation and pain.

In all such losses as your ladyship's has been, there is something that common nature cannot be denied; there is a great deal that good nature may be allowed. But all excessive and outrageous grief or lamentation for the dead, was accounted, among the ancient Christians, to have something heathenish; and, among the civil nations of old, to have something barbarous: and, therefore, it has been the care of the first to moderate it by their precepts, and of the latter to restrain it by their laws.—When young children are taken away, we are sure they are well, and escape much ill, which would, in all appearance, have befallen them if they had staid longer with us. Our kindness to them is deemed to proceed from common opinions, or fond imaginations,

not friendship or esteem ; and to be grounded upon entertainment, rather than use in the many offices of life. Nor would it pass from any person besides your ladyship, to say you lost a companion and a friend of nine years old ; though you lost one indeed, who gave the fairest hopes that could be, of being both in time, and every thing else that is estimable and good. But yet, that itself is very uncertain, considering the chances of time, the infection of company, the snares of the world, and the passions of youth : so that the most excellent and agreeable creature of that tender age, might, by the course of years and accidents, become the most miserable herself ; and a greater trouble to her friends by living long, than she could have been by dying young.

Yet, after all, madam, I think your loss so great, and some measure of your grief so deserved, that, would all your passionate complaints, all the anguish of your heart, do any thing to retrieve it ; could tears water the lovely plant, so as to make it grow again after once it is cut down ; could sighs furnish new breath, or could it draw life and spirits from the wasting of yours ; I am sure your friends would be so far from accusing your passion, that they would encourage it as much, and share it as deeply, as they could. But, alas ! the eternal laws of the creation extinguish all such hopes, forbid all such designs ; nature gives us many children and friends to take them away, but takes none away to give them to us again. And this makes the excesses of grief to be universally condemned as unnatural, because so much in vain ; whereas nature does nothing in vain : as unreasonable, because so contrary to our own designs ; for we all design to be well, and at ease, and by grief we make ourselves troubles most properly out of the dust, whilst our ravings and complaints are but

like arrows shot up into the air, at no mark, and so to no purpose, but only to fall back upon our own heads, and destroy ourselves.

Perhaps, madam, you will say, this is your design, or, if not, your desire ; but I hope you are not yet so far gone, or so desperately bent. Your ladyship knows very well, your life is not your own, but His who lent it you to manage, and preserve, in the best way you can, and not to throw it away, as if it came from some common hand. Our life belongs, in a great measure, to our country, and our family: therefore, by all human laws as well as divine, self-murder has ever been agreed upon as the greatest crime ; and it is punished here with the utmost shame, which is all that can be inflicted upon the dead. But is the crime much less to kill ourselves by a slow poison, than by a sudden wound? Now, if we do it, and know we do it, by a long and continual grief, can we think ourselves innocent? What great difference is there, if we break our hearts, or consume them ; if we pierce them, or bruise them : since all terminates in the same death, as all arises from the same despair? But what if it does not go so far! it is not indeed so bad as it might be, but that does not excuse it : though I do not kill my neighbour, is it no hurt to wound him, or to spoil him of the conveniences of life? The greatest crime is for a man to kill himself: is it a small one to wound himself, by anguish of heart, by grief, or despair ; to ruin his health ; to shorten his age ; to deprive himself of all the pleasure, ease, and enjoyment of life?

Next to the mischiefs which we do ourselves, are those which we do our children, and our friends, who deserve best of us, or at least deserve no ill. The child you carry about you, what has it done, that you should

endeavour to deprive it of life, almost as soon as you bestow it? or if you suffer it to be born, that you should, by your ill usage of yourself, so much impair the strength of its body, and perhaps the very temper of its mind, by giving it such an infusion of melancholy, as may serve to discolour the objects, and disrelish the accidents, it may meet with in the common train of life? Would it be a small injury to my lord Capell, to deprive him of a mother, from whose prudence and kindness he may justly expect the care of his health and education, the forming of his body, and the cultivating of his mind, the seeds of honour and virtue, and the true principles of a happy life? How has lord Essex deserved that you should deprive him of a wife, whom he loves with so much passion, and, which is more, with so much reason; who is so great an honour and support to his family, so great a hope to his fortune, and comfort to his life? Are there so many left of your own great family, that you should desire in a manner wholly to reduce it, by suffering almost the last branch of it, to wither away before its time? or is your country, in this age, so stored with great persons, that you should envy it those whom we may justly expect from so noble a race?

Whilst I had any hopes that your tears would ease you, or that your grief would consume itself by liberty and time, your ladyship knows very well I never accused it; nor ever increased it, by the common, formal ways of attempting to assuage it: and this, I am sure, is the first office of the kind I ever performed, otherwise than in the most ordinary forms. I was in hopes what was so violent, could not be long: but, when I observed it to grow stronger with age, and increase like a stream the further it ran; when I saw it draw out to such unhappy consequences, and threaten not less

than your child, your health, and your life, I could no longer forbear this endeavour. Nor can I end it, without begging of your ladyship, for God's sake, for your own, for that of your children and your friends, your country and your family, that you would no longer abandon yourself to so disconsolate a passion : but that you would, at length, awaken your piety, give way to your prudence, or, at least, rouse up the invincible spirit of the Piercies, which never yet shrunk at any disaster ; that you would sometimes remember the great honours and fortunes of your family, not always the losses ; cherish those veins of good humour that are so natural to you, and sear up those of ill that would make you so unkind to your children, and to yourself ; and, above all, that you would enter upon the cares of your health, and your life. For my part, I know nothing that could be so great an honour and a satisfaction to me, as if your ladyship would own me to have contributed towards this cure ; but, however, none can perhaps more justly pretend to your pardon for the attempt, since there is none, I am sure, who has always had at heart a greater honour for your ladyship's family, nor can have more esteem for you, than, madam,

Your most obedient,

And most humble servant,

William Temple.

LETTER II.

Dr. Doddridge to Sir J. ———. On swearing.

Northampton, Dec. 8, 1742.

Dear sir,

Permit me frankly to speak my mind to you on a subject, on which I fear to be silent, lest I should fail in a branch of duty and gratitude to a gentleman, to

whom I think myself obliged, and whom I would gladly serve to the best of my little ability. Be not angry, when I tell you, I was heartily grieved at the liberties you took last night, in using the venerable name of the Ever Blessed God in so light a manner; and in the needless appeals which you made to him, as to things that would have been believed on much less evidence than the word of Sir J. ———. I have not heard, for some years, so much of that kind of language, except when passing by people of low education, in the streets; whether it be owing to the complaisance with which gentlemen commonly treat our profession, or, as I rather hope, to a sense of what is in itself reasonable and decent.

I am sure, sir, that your knowledge of men and things is capable of making conversation pleasant and improving, and of filling up your full share in it without these dreadful expletives; for dreadful I must call them, when considered with a view to that strict account which must certainly, and quickly, be rendered to God for all our words, as well as our actions.

I was the more solicitous, sir, to mention this affair to you, in consideration of your office as a magistrate; the dignity of which must certainly be most effectually supported by avoiding whatever it requires you to punish in others. In this view, sir, permit me to entreat you to join your efforts with those of all other wise and good men, to discountenance, and, if possible, to drive out of the world, this unprofitable enormity of swearing in common conversation; concerning the evil of which, I am sure it is not necessary to enlarge, when addressing myself to a gentleman of your good understanding.

I conclude, sir, with my most affectionate wishes and prayers for you, that the whole of your conduct, in every circumstance of life, may be such as will yield the most

Heaven and earth to witness," said he, "I would labour for holiness, as I shall soon labour for life. As for riches, and pleasures, and the applauses of men, I account them as dross;—no more to my happiness than the feathers that lie on the floor.—Oh! if the righteous Judge would try me, once more;—if he would but reprieve and spare me a little longer;—in what a spirit would I spend the remainder of my days! I would know no other business, aim at no other end, than perfecting myself in holiness: whatever contributed to that, every means of grace, every opportunity of spiritual improvement, should be dearer to me than thousands of gold and silver.—But alas! why do I amuse myself with fond imaginations? The best resolutions are now insignificant, because they are too late: the day, in which I should have worked, is over and gone; and I see a sad, horrible night approaching, bringing with it the blackness of darkness for ever. Hitherto, (wo is me!) when God called, I refused; when he invited, I was one of them who made excuses. Now, therefore, I receive the reward of my deeds; fearfulness and trembling are come upon me; I am in sore anguish already; and this is but the beginning of sorrows! It does not yet appear what I shall be;—but, surely, I shall be ruined, undone!"

This sad scene I saw with my eyes; these words, and many more equally affecting, I heard with my ears: and, soon after, I attended the unhappy gentleman to his tomb. The poor, breathless skeleton spoke in such an accent, and with so much earnestness, that I could not easily forget him, or his words. And as I was musing upon this sorrowful subject, I remembered Mr. Nash;—I remembered you, sir;—for I discerned too near an agreement and correspondence between yourself and the deceased. They are alike, said I, in their

ways; and what shall hinder them from being alike in their end? The course of their actions is equally full of sin and folly; and why should not the period of them be equally full of horror and distress? I am grievously afraid for the survivor, lest, as he lives the life, so he should die the death, of this wretched man.

For this cause, therefore, I take my pen, to advise, to admonish, nay, to request you, to repent, while you have opportunity; if haply you may find grace and forgiveness. Yet a moment, and you *may* die; yet a little while, and you *must* die: and will you go down with infamy and despair to the grave, rather than depart in peace, and with hopes full of immortality?

But I must tell you plainly, sir, with the utmost freedom, that your present behaviour is not the way to reconcile yourself to God: you are so far from making atonement to offended justice, that you are aggravating the former account, and heaping up an increase of wrath against the day of wrath. For what say the Scriptures? those sacred books, which, at the consummation of all things, the Ancient of days shall open, and judge you by every jot and tittle in them. They testify and declare to every soul of man, "That whosoever liveth in pleasure, is dead while he liveth:" so that as long as you roll on in a continued circle of sensual delights, and vain entertainments, you are dead to all the purposes of piety and virtue; you cannot work out your salvation, or restore yourself to the divine favour. Would you be rescued from the anger of Almighty God? would you be delivered from weeping, and wailing, and incessant wo? Surely you would!—Then I exhort you, as a friend; I beseech you, as a brother; I charge you, as a messenger from the great God, in his own most solemn words: "Cast away from you your transgressions;

make you a new heart, and a new spirit: so iniquity shall not be your ruin."

Perhaps you may be disposed to contemn this letter, and its serious purport; or to recommend it to your companions as a fit subject for raillery: but let me tell you beforehand, that for this, as well as for other things, God will bring you into judgment. He sees me now write; he will observe you while you read; he notes down my words in his book; he will note down your consequent procedure: so that not upon me, but upon your own self, will the neglecting or the despising of my sayings turn.

Be not concerned, sir, to know my name; it is enough that you will know this hereafter: wait but a little, till the Lord, even the most mighty God, shall call the Heaven from above, and the earth, that he may judge his people;—and then you will see me face to face: then shall I be ready, at the dreadful tribunal, to rejoice with you, if you regard my warning, and live; or to be——what God prevent, by inclining your heart to receive this friendly admonition!

LETTER IV.

Rev. James Hervey to ———. On various inconsistencies of conduct.

Weston Favell, June 27, 1747.

My dear friend,

Coming home this evening, I could not forbear musing on the various topics, which furnished matter for our discourse; and now I am all thoughtful and retired, I cannot forbear taking notice of some particulars relating to our conversation. To be silent in such a case, would, I am persuaded, be more displeasing to a gentleman of your discernment and generosity, than to use the utmost freedom of speech.

Was it you, dear sir, who, when a certain passage in Scripture happened to be mentioned, treated it, not indeed with a contemptuous disdain, but with too ludicrous an air? descanted on it, in a sportive and frolicksome manner, in order to create a little pleasantry? Though your design might be innocent, your conduct was apparently wrong. That infinitely precious and important book, should be always held in the highest veneration. Whatever the Divine Spirit vouchsafes to dictate, should be thought and spoken of by mortals, with gratitude, dutifulness, and awe. It is the character of a religious man, that he trembles at God's Word; and it is said of the great Jehovah, that he has magnified his name and his word, above all things.

Who was it, dear sir, that lent to our valuable friend that vile French book, written with an enchanting spirit of elegance, which must render the mischief palatable, and the bane even delicious? I wonder, that your kind and benevolent heart could recommend arsenic for a regale. It puts me in mind of the empoisoned shirt presented to Hercules. I am sure you did not reflect; or else you would no more have transmitted such a pestilential treatise to the perusal of a friend, than you would have transmitted to him a packet of goods from a country depopulated by the plague. If that polluted book still remains in your study, let me beg of you to make it perform quarantine in the flames.

The last particular relates to attendance on the public worship of God. Let us not neglect the assembling of ourselves together, was the advice of the best and greatest casuist in the world; not to say, the injunction of the Maker of all things, and the Judge of all men.—Would we be assured of our love to God? This is one evidence of that most noble and happy temper; “Lord,

I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth."—Would we glorify the Lord? Then let us appear in his courts, fall low on our knees before his footstool, and, in this public manner, avow him for our God, recognise him for our King, and acknowledge him to be our supreme good.—Would we follow the example of our devout and blessed Master? Let us remember that it is written, "Jesus went into the synagogue, as his custom was." And, if we take due care to have our hearts prepared, by a little previous meditation, and earnest prayer, I dare answer for it, our attendance will not be in vain. God will, according to his promise, meet us in his ordinances; make us joyful in his house of prayer; and we shall experience what, (if I remember aright,) that brightest ornament of the court of judicature, judge Hale, declared, that he never sat under the preaching even of the meanest sermon, but he found some word of edification, exhortation, or comfort.

Dear sir, bestow a thought on these things. If the remonstrances are wrong, I willingly retract them; if they are right, you will not pronounce me impertinent. Love and friendship dictate what I write; and the only end I have in view, is the holiness, the usefulness, the happiness, the final salvation, of my much esteemed friend. It is for this, this only, I have now taken my pen in hand: and for this I shall often bend my knees before God; and thus prove myself to be, dear sir, &c.

James Hervey.

CHAPTER V.

LETTERS OF CONGRATULATION.

LETTER I.

Miss Robinson, (afterwards Mrs. Montagu,) to Mrs. Donnellan.—On the new year.

Bullstrode, Jan. 1, 1742.

Dear Mrs. Donnellan,

Though there is no day of the year in which one does not wish all happiness to one's friends, this is the day in which the heart goes forth in particular vows and wishes for the welfare of those we love. It is the birth of a new year, whose entrance we would salute, and hope auspicious. Nor is this particular mark of time of little use ; it teaches us to number our days, which a wise man thought an incitement to the well spending of them. And indeed, did we consider how much the pleasure and profit of our lives depend upon the economy of our time, we should not waste it, as we do, in idle regret or reflection on the past, or in a vain, unuseful regard for the future. In our youth, we defer being prudent till we are old, and look forward to a promise of wisdom as the portion of latter years : when we are old, we seek not to improve, and we scarcely employ ourselves ; we look backward to our youth, as to the day of our diligence, and take a pride in laziness, saying, we rest, as after the accomplishment of our undertakings. We ought to ask for our daily merit as for our daily bread. The mind, no more than the body, can be sustained by the food taken yesterday, or promised for to-morrow. Every day ought to be considered as a

period apart: some virtue should be exercised, some knowledge improved, some pleasure comprehended, in it. Many look upon the present day as only the day before to-morrow, and wear it out with a weary impatience of its length. I pity those people who are ever in pursuit, but never in possession. I would wish myself as little anxious as possible about the future; for the event of things generally mocks our foresight, eludes our care, and shows us how vain is the labour of anxiety.

May the sun every day this year, when it rises, find you well with yourself; and, at its setting, leave you happy with your friends! Let yours be rather the felicity of ease and contentment, than the extacy of mirth and joy! May your mind repose in virtue and truth, and never in indolence or negligence! That you already know much, is the best incitement to know more; if you study trifles, you neglect two excellent things, knowledge and your own understanding. I wish we were as cautious of unbending the mind as we are of relaxing our nerves. I should as soon be afraid of stretching a glove till it was too strait, as of making the understanding and capacity narrow by extending them to things of a large comprehension; yet this is a common notion.

Our happy society is just breaking up; but I will think with gratitude, and not with regret, of the pleasant hours which I have had.—I hope this year will be happy to me: the last was encumbered with fears, and I had not much health in it; yet I was concerned at taking leave of it yesterday. I had not for it the tenderness one feels for a friend, or the gratitude one has to a benefactor; but I was reconciled to it as an old acquaintance. It had not enriched, nor, I fear, improved me; but it suffered me, and admitted my friends.

The dutchess of Portland thanks you for your letter : she will answer it by word of mouth.—I am sorry you have been low-spirited ; but I can never like you the less for it. Mutual friendships are built on mutual wants ; were you completely happy, you would not need me. Imperfection wants and seeks assistance.

I am, dear madam, &c.

Elizabeth Robinson.

LETTER II.

Dr. Conyers Middleton to Mrs. Montagu.—On her marriage.

Hildersham, Aug. 17, 1742.

Madam,

I should have paid my compliments earlier on the joyful occasion of your marriage, if I had known whither to address them, for your brother's letter, which informed me, happened to lie several days at Cambridge before it came to my hands. My congratulation, however, though late, wants nothing of the warmth, with which the earliest was accompanied: for I must beg leave to assure you, that I take a real part in the present joy of your family ; and feel a kind of paternal pleasure, from the good fortune of one, whose amiable qualities I have witnessed, from her tenderest years, and to whom I have ever been wishing and omimating every thing that is good. I always expected that your singular merit and accomplishments would recommend you, in proper time, to an advantageous and honourable match ; and I was assured that your prudence would never suffer you to accept any which was not worthy of you : so that it gives me not only the greatest pleasure on your account, but a sort of pride also on my own, to see my

expectations fully answered, and my predictions literally fulfilled.

You have the fairest prospect of conjugal felicity now open before you, by your marriage with a gentleman, not only of figure and fortune, but of great knowledge and understanding: who values you not so much for the charms of your person, as for those of your mind, which will always give you the surest hold of him; as they will every day be gathering strength, whilst the others are daily losing it. Beauty has great power to conciliate affection, but cannot preserve it without the help of the mind: whatever the perfections of the one may be, the accomplishments of the other will always be the more amiable, and, in the marriage state especially, will be found, after all, the most solid and lasting basis of domestic comfort. But I am using the privilege of my years, and instead of compliments, giving lessons to one who does not need them. I shall only add, therefore, my repeated wishes of all the happiness that matrimony can give both to you and Mr. Montagu, to whose worthy character I am no stranger, though I have not the honour to be known to him in person; and that I am, with sincere respect, madam,

Your faithful friend,

And obedient servant,

Conyers Middleton.

LETTER III.

Dr. Conyers Middleton to Mrs. Montagu.—On the same subject.

Hildersham, Oct. 4, 1742.

Madam,

I should have paid my thanks much earlier for your obliging and entertaining letter, if business of

various kinds had not constantly prevented me, till I was forced to a resolution of being prevented no longer. I now, therefore, beg leave to assure you, that your letter gave me great pleasure on many accounts: but above all, by letting me see that you are not only perfectly at ease, and happy in your late change of condition, but furnished with all the materials proper to secure that happiness for life; since the principles which you lay down for your conduct in it, cannot fail to draw every good out of it, which it can possibly yield. Young ladies who have been admired as beauties, are apt to consider a husband as an acquisition of conquest, and to be shocked at the thought of being reduced by marriage to a state of subjection; and from a resolution to shake off this yoke, often lay the foundation of a contest which begins with matrimony itself, and continues sometimes to the end of it. But this capital point you wisely give up at once, and profess the duty of submission as essential to the character of a good wife: a condescension, that cannot betray you into any inconvenience, since a reasonable husband will never require more of it than is due; and a kind one will always be content with less, and when convinced of the disposition, will generally dispense with the act. As your profession, I dare say, is sincere, I may trust you with a paradox, which you will certainly find to be true, that the more submissive you are, the less you will be obliged to submit; and should it be your ambition even to govern, you will accomplish it with the most ease, by acknowledging yourself a subject.

Between a married couple of sense and affection, for it is with such only that any happiness can be found, there can hardly be any dispute but what must turn upon trifles, or the contrast, perhaps, of some little habits,

which, though indifferent in themselves, cannot suffer a contradiction without some regret. But as these are common to both sexes, and every person has his foibles in some degree or other, it must be the business of reason to make this matter easy by mutual compliances, or a cartel, as it were, of exchange; where those, however, who happen to yield the most, will, by that conquest over themselves, which of all others is the most beneficial, be sure to be the greatest gainers in the end. As I have formerly been a musician, a reflection has sometimes occurred to me, from that art, which might, I think, be applied, with good effect, to the married state. From the pains and patience, which are required to put an instrument in tune, before it can afford us any music, I have been induced to wonder why the married pair, who are mutually the instruments of that harmony on which each other's comfort depends, should be generally so regardless of the necessary care of tuning, or reducing each other's temper to its proper tone, by softening it when too sharp, and raising it when too low: for I am persuaded that much less pains, than what we employ, without scruple, upon a harpsichord, would keep both the husband and wife in, what we call, concert pitch. But some perhaps may be apt to raise a different reflection from the same subject; that discords in matrimony, like those in music, are both useful and necessary, to enhance and strengthen the harmony of the close. But the comparison will not hold, for the experiment will always be dangerous in the married state, where they may be compared more justly to those slight indispositions of the body, which, though they do not threaten the ruin of the whole, yet are apt to weaken some part; and whose proper use is to admonish us to guard our health with the greater care. In short, if two enemies should be forced by

any accident to be comrades for life, the necessity of the thing would oblige them to become friends. The same reason then, one would think, should more strongly engage a pair of friends, tied together by choice and affection in a partnership inseparable, to extirpate every seed of discord, that might possibly arise betwixt them.

I have thrown together these few observations from my long experience of the married life, not by way of counsel, which you do not want ; but in confirmation of those excellent resolutions which your own good sense has suggested to you, and as a testimony of my regard, and of my sincere wishes for your prosperity.

By this time, I suppose, you begin to think of quitting the country, and returning to your winter quarters in town ; Cambridge is but a little out of your road, where we should be proud to receive you at our house. We may plead some kind of right to expect this favour from you both, since this University had the honour of Mr. Montagu's education, and claims some share also in yours.

I did not know that your sister was with you, or I should have added our compliments to her, which I desire you to make ; and with our wishes of all happiness to Mr. Montagu and yourself, I beg leave to subscribe myself, madam,

Your affectionate friend,

Conyers Middleton.

LETTER IV.

Miss Talbot to a new-born infant.*

You are heartily welcome, my dear little cousin, into this unquiet world ! Long may you continue in

* The daughter of Mr. John Talbot, and the grand-daughter of the lord chancellor Talbot.

it, in all the happiness it can give ; and bestow enough on your friends, to answer fully the impatience with which you have been expected ! May you grow up to have every accomplishment that your good friend, the bishop of Derry *, can already imagine in you ; and, in the mean time, may you have a nurse with a tunable voice, who will not talk an immoderate deal of nonsense to you !

You are at present, my dear, in a very philosophical disposition. The gaities and follies of life have no attraction for you. Its sorrows you kindly commiserate : but, however, do not suffer them to disturb your slumbers ; find charms in nothing but harmony and repose. You have as yet contracted no partialities ; you are entirely ignorant of party distinctions ; and you look with a perfect indifference on all human splendour. You have an absolute dislike to the vanities of dress : and are likely for many months, to observe the bishop of Bristol's † first rule of conversation, Silence ; though tempted to transgress it by the novelty and strangeness of all the objects round you.

As you advance farther in life, this philosophical temper will, by degrees, wear off. The first object of your admiration will probably be the candle ; and thence, you will contract a taste, (as we all do,) for the gaudy and the glaring, without making one moral reflection on the danger of such false admiration, as leads people many a time to burn their fingers. You will then begin to show great partiality for some very good aunts, who will contribute all they can towards spoiling you. And you will be very fond of an excellent mamma, who will teach you, by her example, all sorts of good qualities. But let me warn you of one thing, my dear : and that is, not to learn

* Dr. Rundle.

† Dr. Secker.

of her to have so immoderate a love of home, as is quite contrary to all the privileges of this polite age ; and to give up entirely all those pretty graces of whim, flutter, and affectation, which so many charitable poets have declared to be the prerogative of our sex.

O ! my poor cousin, to what purpose will you boast this prerogative, when your nurse, with a pious care, to sow the seeds of jealousy and emulation as early as possible, tells you that you have a fine little brother come to put your nose out of joint ? There will be nothing to be done then, but to be very good ; and prove what, believe me, admits of very little dispute, (though it has occasioned abundance,) that we girls, however people give themselves airs, are by no means to be despised. Let the men unenvied shine in public : it is we, who must make their homes delightful to them ; and if they provoke us, not less uncomfortable.

I do not expect you to answer this letter yet awhile ; but as, I dare say, you have the greatest interest with your papa, I will beg you to prevail upon him that we may know by a line, (before his time is engrossed by another secret committee,) that you and your mamma are well. In the mean time, I will only assure you, that all here rejoice in your existence extremely ; and that I am, my very young correspondent,

Most affectionately yours,

Catherine Talbot.

LETTER V.

Dr. Porteus, bishop of London, to Mrs. Carter.—On the promotion of her nephew.

January 4, 1798.

Madam,

Although you and I have long been very good friends, I do not think I ever had the gallantry to

present you with a new year's gift. I now wish to amend my manners in this respect; and as we are both of us a little past our prime, it would not suit either of us to wait very long for any thing. I will, therefore, enter upon a new course (as all penitents ought to do) without delay; and I will, in one respect at least, begin the year well, by desiring you to accept, as a new year's gift, the living of Thorley, in Hertfordshire, for your nephew Mr. Pennington.

In offering you this benefice, I have more than one source of gratification. I have the satisfaction, in the first place, of giving competence and comfort to a worthy young man, whose exemplary conduct, and attention to his parochial duties, are highly spoken of by his parishioners. And I have also the great pleasure of testifying my regard for a most excellent lady, whom I have long known and revered; whose talents, learning, and piety, are an honour to her sex, and to the age in which she lives; and who is the oldest and most intimate surviving friend of my revered patron and benefactor, archbishop Secker. Were he now living, he would not, I think, be displeased with this mark of my attention to one whom I know he highly esteemed and loved.

I am, madam, &c.

Beilby London.

CHAPTER VI.

LETTERS OF CONDOLENCE AND CONSOLATION.

LETTER I.

Dr. Tillotson (afterwards archbishop of Canterbury) to Mr. Nicholas Hunt, when he was near the close of life.

Sir,

I am sorry to understand by Mr. Janeway's letter to my son, that your distemper grows upon you, and that you seem to decline so fast. I am very sensible how much easier it is to give advice, in the case of another, than to take it in our own. I have been exercised, of late, with a very severe trial, in the loss of my dear and only child; in which I do perfectly submit to God's good pleasure, firmly believing that he always does what is best. And yet, though reason is satisfied, passion is not so soon appeased; and when nature has received a wound, time must be allowed for the healing of it. Since that, God has thought fit to give me a nearer summons, and a closer warning of my mortality, in the danger of an apoplexy: which yet, I thank God, has occasioned no very melancholy reflections; but this perhaps, is more owing to natural disposition, than to philosophy and wise consideration. Your case, I know, is very different: you are of a temper naturally melancholy, and under a distemper apt to increase it*; for both which great allowances are to be made.

* Mr Hunt was afflicted with a cancer, of which he died in 1687.

into ; and, in the mean time, to exercise faith and patience, and be of good courage.

I am not accustomed to write so long a letter : but I heartily compassionate your case ; and I should be glad if I could suggest any thing that might help to mitigate your trouble, and make the sharp and rugged way, through which you are to pass into a better world, a little more smooth and easy. I pray to God to fit us both for that great change, which we must once undergo ; and, if we are in good measure fit for it, sooner or later makes no great difference. I commend you to the Father of Mercies, and the God of all consolation ; beseeching him to increase your faith and patience, and to stand by you in your last and great conflict ; that, when you “ walk through the valley of the shadow of death,” you may fear no evil ; and when your heart fails, and your strength fails, you may find him “ the strength of your heart, and your portion for ever.”

Farewell, my good friend ! Whilst we are here, let us pray for one another, that we may have a joyful meeting in another world.

I remain,

Your truly affectionate friend and servant,

John Tillotson.

LETTER II.

Dr. Swift to the lord treasurer Oxford.—On the death of his daughter.*

November 21, 1713.

Your lordship is the person in the world to whom every body ought to be silent upon such an occasion as this, which is only to be supported by the greatest

* This lady was married Nov. 15, 1712, to the marquis of Caermarthen ; brought to bed of a son, (afterwards duke of Leeds,) Nov. 6, 1713 ; and died Nov. 20, aged twenty eight.

wisdom and strength of mind ; in which, the wisest and best of us, who would presume to offer our thoughts, are far your inferiors. It is true, indeed, that a great misfortune is apt to weaken the mind, and disturb the understanding. This, indeed, might be some pretence to us to administer our consolations, if we had been wholly strangers to the person gone. But, my lord, whoever had the honour to know her, must want a comforter as much as your lordship ; because, though their loss is not so great, yet they have not the same firmness and prudence, to support the want of a friend, a patroness, a benefactress, as you have to support that of a daughter. My lord, both religion and reason forbid me to have the least concern for that lady's death, upon her own account ; and he must be an ill Christian, or a perfect stranger to her virtues, who would not, with all submission to God Almighty's will, wish himself in her condition. But your lordship, who has lost such a daughter, and we, who have lost such a friend, and the world, which has lost such an example, have, in our several degrees, greater cause to lament, than, perhaps, was ever given by any private person before: for, my lord, I sat down to think of every amiable quality that could enter into the composition of a lady, and I could not single out one, which she did not possess in as high a degree, as human nature is capable of. But as to your lordship's own particular, as it is an inconceivable misfortune to have lost such a daughter, so it is a possession which few can boast of, to have had such a daughter. I have often said to your lordship, that I never knew any one by many degrees so happy in his family as you ; and I affirm you are so still, though not by so many degrees : whence it is very obvious, that your lordship should reflect on what you have left, as well as on what you have lost.

To say the truth, my lord, you began to be too happy for a mortal ; much more happy than is usual with the dispensations of Providence long to continue. You had been the great instrument of preserving your country from foreign and domestic ruin : you have had the felicity of establishing your family in the greatest lustre, without any obligation to the bounty of your prince : by your courage and abilities, you have triumphed over the violence and treachery of your enemies ; and by the steadiness of your temper, over the inconstancy and caprice of your friends. Perhaps, your lordship has felt too much complacency within yourself, upon this universal success : and God Almighty, who would not disappoint your endeavours for the public, thought fit to punish you with a domestic loss, where he knew your heart was most exposed ; and, at the same time, has fulfilled his own wise purposes, by rewarding, in a better life, that excellent creature whom he has taken from you.

I know not, my lord, why I write this to you, nor hardly what I am writing : I am sure, it is not from any compliance with form ; it is not from supposing that I can give your lordship any ease. I think it was an impulse upon me, that I should say something : and whether I shall send you what I have written, I am yet in doubt.

I am, my lord, &c.

Jonathan Swift.

LETTER III.

*Dr. Hough, bishop of Worcester, to Mrs. Knightley.
On the death of her son *.*

February 2, 1731.

Madam,

I should not have been altogether silent on a subject that has sat heavy on my own mind, much more

* A most promising young man, fellow of All Souls, Cambridge, who died in the flower of his age.

on yours, were I not sure that your better sense suggests all, and more than, I am able to say.

You know very well, that the true character of a man does not depend on the length of his days, but on the measure of his good qualities ; and when that measure is complete, the Almighty, whose eye is always upon him, sees him fitly prepared for a more exalted state, and graciously admits him into it : others advance more slowly to perfection, and are suffered to have their course. As some sorts of fruit are long in ripening ; others make haste to maturity : and both are gathered accordingly. It has of old been frequently observed, that the lustre of those accomplishments which, in some persons, breaks out to our amazement, when we apprehended it to be only in the dawn, shows itself in this world but a little while : we gaze, and it disappears. Such people finish their part quickly ; and, with full applause, the scene closes upon them. How infinitely valuable are they, above those who, in a long series of life, never distinguish themselves ! who are no sooner out of sight than they are forgotten : but the memory of the others is precious.

We think doubtfully of some who are gone, and uncomfortably of others ; but of the good and virtuous we can have only pleasing reflections : for, will it be allowed a reasonable cause of grief, that one whom I love, is promoted out of my reach, to the height of his most laudable ambition ? Would it be friendly in me to keep him back, and postpone his happiness to my own inclinations ? I can easily answer : No, by no means ; I know he is happy, and I rejoice in it. But he is taken from me ; his conversation was extremely endearing ; and I lament my own loss. This will not be denied me in a moderate manner ; some allowance is due to human

frailty : but if I carry my grief to excess, I must bear to be told, that my natural affection is too strong for my reason, much more for my faith. Reason, by a thousand undeniable arguments, is ready to prove, that what cannot be remedied, must be submitted to with the utmost equanimity : and Faith, were it lively and active, would open the regions of eternal bliss, and discover those, who have been bright examples in this world, in so glorious a state there, as would animate my hope, abate my regret for their absence, and invigorate my endeavours to follow them. Who can conceive that transport of joy which will attend such a meeting ? and how insignificant will the former short separation then appear !

Indeed, madam, there was a time when I possessed one, who was the desire of my eyes, and the delight of my heart. I relished every thing with her, and nothing without her. We both knew the common fate of mankind, that a parting was unavoidable. It was very often the subject of our discourse. I will not say what convulsions attended it : but, I thank God ! I had the hope of a Christian ; and *that* supported me. And let you and me keep up our spirits, in this confidence, that the variable and transitory state in which we now live, will soon pass away ; and then, we and our friends shall find ourselves together again, inseparable and unalterably happy for ever !

I am, madam,

Your affectionate and faithful servant,

John Worcester.

LETTER IV.

Rev. John Barker to Dr. Doddridge in his last illness.

May 5, 1751.

My dear friend,

We are too nearly interested in that precious life, which now appears in danger of being cut off in the midst of its days, to hear of its wasting and languishing, without great concern, and fervent prayer to God. How your letter affected my heart in public, your friends are witness: but what I felt for my dear brother, and for the ministers and churches of Christ, God and myself only know.

I will not now say, Why did you spend so fast? why did you not spare yourself a little sooner? I will rather heartily thank you, that you use all the means you can to repair your frame, and restore and prolong your usefulness. It is the greatest kindness, and the highest instance of friendship, you can now show us; and I acknowledge, with tears of joy, your goodness to us in this point. My dear friend, consent and choose to stay with us a little longer, if it please God. This is not only needful to Northampton and the adjacent towns and villages, but desirable to us all, and beneficial to our whole interest. Stay, Doddridge, O stay, and strengthen our hands, whose shadows grow long! Fifty is but the height of vigour, usefulness, and honour. Do not take leave abruptly. Providence has not directed you yet, on whom to drop your mantle. Who shall instruct our youth; fill our vacant churches; diffuse a spirit of piety and charity, of moderation and candour, in our villages, our towns, and cities;—when you are removed from us? who shall unfold the sacred oracles, teach us the meaning and use of our Bibles, rescue us from the bondage

of systems, party-opinions, empty, useless speculations, and fashionable forms and phrases ; and point out to us the simple, intelligible, consistent, uniform religion of our Lord and Saviour ? who shall—But I am silenced by a voice which says : “ Shall not the Almighty do what he will with his own ? Is it not his prerogative to take and leave, as seemeth him good ? He demands the liberty of disposing of his servants, at his own pleasure. Doddridge has laboured abundantly. He has not slept as do others. He has risen to nobler heights than things below. He hopes to inherit glory. He has laboured for that, which endures to eternal life ; labour, which the more it abounds, the more it exalts and magnifies its object, and the more effectually answers and secures its end. It is yours, to wait and trust ; the Almighty’s, to dispose and govern. On him be the care of ministers and churches. The vineyard is his ; and the labourers are his. He sets them to work ; and when he pleases, he calls them, and gives them their hire.” With these thoughts, my passions subside ; my mind is softened and satisfied ; I resign you, myself, and all, to God, saying : “ Thy will be done !”

We read in the book of God, the word of truth and gospel of our salvation, that as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. The one ruined his posterity by sin ; the other raised his seed to immortality. Sin poisons the dart, and inflames the wound, of death ; but Jesus Christ redeems us from its power. See thou Christian minister, thou faithful servant of God, and friend of my bosom, see the important period, when the surprising signs, and descending inhabitants, of Heaven, proclaim the second coming of our divine Saviour ! The heavens open, and disclose his radiant glory ! Hear the awakening trump ! See, the dead in Christ arise glorious

and immortal; leave corruption, weakness, and dishonour behind them; behold their Lord seated on his throne of judgment, attended and surrounded by the ministers of his power, and shining in all the fulness of celestial glory; and not only behold, but share, his victory and lustre, partake of his image and influence! And see, the demolished fabric is reared again, stately and ornamented, illustrious and permanent, to demonstrate how entirely death is vanquished, and all its ruins are repaired. What was once the prey of worms, is now a companion of angels. And when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal, immortality; every eye shall be fastened on the mighty Conqueror, and every voice and harp be tuned to songs of praise. "O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?"—Yes, Doddridge, it is so: the fruit of our Redeemer's sufferings and victory, is the entire and eternal destruction of sin and death. And is it not a glorious destruction? a most blessed ruin? No enemies so formidable, but they are vanquished and disarmed; no chains so heavy and galling, but they are burst asunder; no prison so dark and dismal, but it is pulled down and raised: the unerring dart is blunted and broken. Our Lord is risen! he is the first-fruits of them that slept.

How glad should I be to hear, that God is pleased to prolong your life on earth, to declare these glorious truths, and teach us to improve them! In this, your friends with you, and in every place, join, and make it their common petition to the great Disposer of all events, Use every means you can for the recovery of your health, for the sake of your friends, among whom is

Your faithful and affectionate,

John Barker.

PART II.

MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS.

CHAPTER I.

LETTERS OF LADY RUSSEL.

LETTER I.

To Dr. Fitzwilliam.*

Woborne Abbey, Sept. 30, 1688.

I need not tell you, good doctor, how little capable I have been of writing. You will soon find how unfit I am still for it, since my disordered thoughts can offer me no other than such words as express the deepest sorrow, and my mind is confused. But such men as you, and particularly one so much my friend, will, I know, bear with my weakness, and compassionate my distress, as you have already done by your kind letter, and excellent prayer. I endeavour to make the best use I can of both ; but I am so unworthy a creature, that though I have desires, yet I have no disposition, for receiving comfort.

You who knew us both, and how we lived, must allow I have just cause to bewail my loss. I know it is common with others to lose a friend ; but to have lived with such a one, it may be questioned how few can glory in the like happiness, and, consequently, lament the like loss.—Who can but shrink at such a blow, till

* A clergyman, for whom lady Russel entertained a great esteem and respect : he had been chaplain to her father.

by the mighty aids of the Holy Spirit, they let the gift of God, which he has put into their hearts, interpose? But, alas! my understanding is clouded; my faith is weak; and my thoughts are filled with false notions, difficulties, and doubts: but this I hope to make the occasion of humiliation, not of sin. I know I have deserved my punishment, and I will be silent under it; but yet secretly my heart mourns, too sadly I fear, and cannot be comforted, because I have lost the dear companion and sharer of all my joys and sorrows. Can I regret his quitting a less good for a greater? O! if I did steadfastly believe, I could not be dejected. For I will not injure myself by saying, that I offer my mind any inferior consolation to supply my loss. No; I most willingly forsake this world, this vexatious, troublesome world, in which I have no other business, but to rid my soul from sin; secure, by faith and a good conscience, my eternal interests; with patience and courage, bear my eminent misfortunes; and having finished the remnant of the work appointed me on earth, joyfully wait for the heavenly perfection in God's good time, when, by his infinite mercy, I may be accounted worthy to enter into that place of rest, whither he is gone for whom I grieve. From these contemplations must come my best support.

Good doctor, you will think, as you have reason, that I set no bounds, when I give way to my complaints; but I will release you, first fervently asking the continuance of your prayers for

Your afflicted,

But very faithful servant,

Rachel Russel

LETTER II.

To Dr. Fitzwilliam.

Woborne Abbey, April 20, 1684.

Believe me, good doctor, I find myself uneasy at reading your short letter of the eighth of April, before I had answered yours of the eleventh of March. I have several times taken a pen in my hand to do it, and I have been prevented by despatching less pleasing business first; and so my time was spent before I came to that which I intended to perform before I laid away the pen.

The future part of my life will not, I expect, pass as I would choose. Sense has been long enough gratified; indeed so long, that I know not how to live by faith: yet the pleasant stream that fed it near fourteen years together, being gone, I have no sort of refreshment, but when I can repair to that living Fountain whence all comfort flows. I am undone, irrecoverably so, as to my temporal desires and concerns. Time runs on; and usually wears off some of that sharpness of thought inseparable from my circumstances: but I cannot experience such an effect, every week making me more and more sensible of the miserable change in my condition. But the same merciful Hand which has held me up from sinking in extreme calamities, will, I verily believe, do so still, that I faint not to the end in this sharp conflict, nor, by discontent, add sin to my grievous weight of sorrows. You observe, I doubt not, that I let my pen run too eagerly upon this subject: indeed it is very hard for me to restrain it; especially when I am writing to those who pity my distress, and would afford me relief any way in their power. I am glad I have so expressed myself to you, as to induce you to continue

the course you have begun with me, by setting before me plainly my duty of every kind.

I entertain some thoughts of going for a few days to that now desolate Stratton, where I must expect new and sorrowful reflections at the first, it being a place where I have lived in sweet and full content; considered the condition of others, and thought none deserved my envy: but I must pass no more such days on earth. However, places are indeed nothing: where can I dwell that his figure is not present to me? Nor would I have it otherwise: so I resolve that shall be no bar to the acquitting of any obligation upon me. The immediate one, is the settling, and indeed the giving up of the trust which my dear lord had from my sister. Fain would I see that performed, as I know he would have done it had he lived. If I find I can do as I desire, I will, by God's permission, infallibly go; but not to stay more than two or three weeks: my children will remain here, who shall ever have my diligent attendance; therefore I shall hasten back to them.

I take, if I do go, my sister Margaret; and I believe lady Shaftsbury will meet me at Stratton. This I choose, as thinking that persons being there, to whom I must observe some rules, I shall be induced to restrain myself, and to keep in better bounds my wild and sad thoughts.—Blessed be the good prayers of others for me; they will, I hope, help me forward towards the great end of our creation.

I am most cordially, good doctor,

Your ever mournful,

But ever faithful friend,

Rachel Russel.

LETTER III.

To Dr. Fitzwilliam.

Woborne Abbey, Oct. 11, 1685.

Now I know where to find you, good doctor, (which I do by your letter written at my cousin Spencer's, you will be sure to hear from me, who am not ashamed to be on the receiving hand with you. What am I that I should say, Why is it not otherwise? No, I do not; nor do I grudge or envy you the pious and ingenuous pleasure you have in it. My part in this world is of another nature. I thank you, sir, (God must give you the recompense,) you instruct me admirably how to overcome, and to make the application from Rev. iii. 12. The great thing is to acquiesce with all one's heart in the good pleasure of God, who will prove us by the ways and dispensations which he sees best. Who can tell his works from the beginning to the end? But who can praise his goodness more than wretched I, that he has not cut me off in anger, who have taken his chastisements so heavily, not weighing his mercies in the midst of judgments! The stroke was of the fiercest kind surely: but had I not then a reasonable ground to hope, that he whom I loved as I did my own soul, was raised from a prison to a throne? Was I not enabled to shut up my own sorrows, that I increased not his sufferings by seeing mine? How were my sinking spirits supported by the compassion of excellent and wise Christians, who, without ceasing, admonished me of my duty, instructed, reproved, and comforted me! You know, doctor, I was not destitute; and I must acknowledge that many, like yourself, with devout zeal and great charity, contributed to the gathering together of my scattered spirits, and to the subjecting

of them to such a submission as I could obtain under so astonishing a calamity. And further, God has spared me hitherto the children of so excellent a friend, given them hopeful understandings, and very tractable and sweet dispositions; has spared my life, in usefulness, I trust, to them; and, as I am to linger in a world I can no more delight in, has given me a freedom from bodily pain to a degree I scarcely ever knew. This calls for praises, in which my dead heart is not exercised; but I bewail my infirmity. He who took our nature, and felt our infirmities, knows my weakness, and the sharpness of my sorrows.

I know not if you have heard that some unlooked-for accidents in my family have hurried me into new trouble. A young lady, whom my uncle Ruvigny brought with him, falling ill of the small-pox, I removed my children to Bedford-house, then followed myself, for the quieting of my good uncle's mind, who would have it so: thence I brought my little tribe down to Woborne; and when I heard how fatal the young lady's distemper was, I returned to Bedford-house, to take my last leave of as kind a relation, and as zealous and tender a friend, as ever any body had. To my uncle and aunt, the death of their niece was an inexpressible loss, but to herself it was the contrary: she died, as she had lived, a pattern to all who knew her. As her body grew weak, her faith and hope grew strong: she comforted her comforters; edified all about her; and magnified the goodness of God, that she died in a country, where she could in peace, give up her soul to Him who made it. What a glorious thing, doctor, it is to live and die as she did! I heard my uncle and aunt say, that in the seven years she had been with them, they never could tax her with a failure in piety or

worldly prudence ; yet she had been roughly attacked, as the French Gazettes will tell you, if you have leisure to look them over. I keep them together ; and I will send them to you.

I am,

Your much obliged servant,

Rachel Russel.

LETTER IV.

To Dr. Fitzwilliam.

Woborne Abbey, Nov. 27, 1685.

As you profess, good doctor, to take pleasure in your writings to me, from a desire to promote my welfare, so do I in receiving them as testimonies of your regard for me, both in my worldly and my spiritual concerns ; and I need not waste my time nor yours to tell you they are very valuable to me. You say things sometimes, by which I should think you seasoned, or rather tainted, with being so much where compliment or praise is best learned : but I conclude, that what one heartily wishes to be in a friend, one is apt to believe is so ; and I endeavour to have a true not a false title to the least virtue which you are disposed to attribute to me.

If I could contemplate the conduct of Providence in the manner you do, it would give me ease indeed, and no disastrous events would much affect me. The new scenes of each day make me often conclude myself very void of temper and reason, that I still shed tears of sorrow and not of joy, that so good a man is landed safe on the happy shore of a blessed eternity. Doubtless, he is at rest ; though I find none without him, for he was a true partner in all my joys and griefs. I trust the Almighty will pass by this my infirmity. I was too rich in possessions, whilst I possessed my dear lord. From

the enticing delights of the world I can now be the better weaned. All relish for them is gone : I bless God for it : and I pray that I may more and more turn the stream of my affections upwards, and set my heart upon the ever-satisfying perfections of God ; not starting at his darkest providences, but remembering continually that either his glory, justice, or power, is advanced by every one of them, and that mercy is over all his works, as we shall one day behold with ravishing delight. In the mean time, I endeavour to suppress all the wild imaginations which a melancholy fancy is apt to let in ; and to say with the man in the Gospel, " I believe ; help thou my unbelief ! "

I expect it will be near Christmas before my lord Bedford removes for the winter ; but I have not yet discoursed with him about it, nor how long he desires our company. So that whether I shall come before him, or with him, I know not. He shall please himself : for I have no will in these matters ; nor can I like one thing or way better than another, if the convenience and advantage are alike to the young creatures, in whose service, and for whose good, I shall use all the diligence that is in my power.

I am, sir,

Your obliged friend,

Rachel Russel.

CHAPTER II.

LETTERS TO AND FROM MR. POPE.

LETTER I.

Mr. Pope to Mr. Wycherley.

April 30, 1705.

I cannot contend with you: therefore, give me leave at once to wave all your compliments, and to collect only this in general from them, that your design is to encourage me. But I separate from all the rest that paragraph or two in which you make me so warm an offer of your friendship. Were I possessed of that, it would put an end to all those speeches with which you now make me blush; and change them to wholesome advices and free sentiments, which might make me wiser and happier. I know it is the general opinion, that friendship is best contracted betwixt persons of equal age; but I have so much interest to be of another mind, that you must pardon me if I cannot forbear telling you a few notions of mine, in opposition to that opinion.

In the first place, it is observable, that the love we bear to our friends, is generally caused by our finding the same dispositions in them, which we feel in ourselves. This is only self-love at the bottom: but the affection betwixt people of different ages cannot well be so, the inclinations of such being commonly various. The friendship of two young men is often occasioned by love of pleasure, each being desirous for his own sake of one to assist or encourage him in the course he pursues; as that of two old men is frequently on the score of some profit, lucre, or design upon others. Now, as a young

man, who is less acquainted with the ways of the world, has in all probability less of interest ; and an old man, who may be weary of himself, has, or should have, less of self-love : so the friendship between them is the more likely to be true, and unmixed with too much self-regard. One may add to this, that such a friendship is of greater use and advantage to both : for the old man will probably become agreeable to please the young one, and the young man more discreet and prudent by the help of the old one ; so it may prove a cure of those epidemical diseases of age and youth, sourness and madness. I hope you will not need many arguments to convince you of the possibility of this : one alone abundantly satisfies me, and convinces to the heart; which is, that young as I am, and old as you are, I am

Your entirely affectionate &c.

Alexander Pope.

LETTER II.

Mr. Pope to Mr. (afterwards sir Richard) Steel.

July 15, 1712.

Dear sir,

You formerly observed to me, that nothing makes a more ridiculous figure in a man's life, than the disparity we often find in him sick and well : thus one of an unfortunate constitution is perpetually exhibiting a miserable example of the alternate weakness of his mind, and of his body. I have had frequent opportunities of late to consider myself in these different views ; and I hope, I have received some advantage by it. If what Waller says be true, that

The soul's dark cottage, batter'd and decay'd,

Lets in new light through chinks that time has made ;
then surely sickness, contributing not less than old age

to shake down this scaffolding of the body, may discover the inward structure more plainly. Sickness is a sort of early old age. It teaches us a diffidence in our earthly state, and inspires us with the thoughts of a future, better than a thousand volumes of philosophers and divines. It gives so warning a concussion to those props of our vanity, our strength and youth, that we think of fortifying ourselves within, when there is so little dependence upon our outworks. Youth, at the very best, is but a betrayer of human life, in a gentler and smoother manner than age. It is like a stream that nourishes a plant upon its bank, and causes it to flourish and blossom to the sight, but at the same time is undermining it at the root in secret. My youth has dealt more fairly and openly with me. It has afforded several prospects of my danger, and given me an advantage not very common to young men, that the attractions of the world have not dazzled me very much ; and I begin, where most people end, with a full conviction of the emptiness of all sorts of ambition, and the unsatisfactory nature of all human pleasures.

When a smart fit of sickness tells me that this poor tenement of my body will fall in a little time, I am even as unconcerned as was that honest Hibernian, who, being in bed in the great storm some years ago, and told the house would tumble over his head, made answer, "What care I for the house? I am only a lodger." I fancy it is the best time to die when one is in the best humour ; and so excessively weak as I now am, I may say with conscience, that I am not at all uneasy at the thought, that many men, whom I never had any esteem for, are likely to enjoy this world after me. When I reflect what an inconsiderable little atom every single man is, with respect to the whole creation, I think it is

a shame to be concerned at the removal of so trivial an animal as I am. The morning after my exit, the sun will rise as bright as ever, the flowers smell as sweet, the plants spring as green; the world will proceed in its old course; people will laugh as heartily, and marry as fast, as they were used to do. "The memory of man" (as it is elegantly expressed in the Book of Wisdom) "passeth away as the remembrance of a guest that tarrieth but one day." There are reasons enough, in the fourth chapter of the same book, to make a young man contented with the prospect of death. "For honourable age is not that which standeth in length of time, or is measured by number of years. But wisdom is the gray hair to men; and an unspotted life is old age.—He was taken away speedily, lest wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul."

I am your &c.

Alexander Pope.

LETTER III.

Mr. Pope to the honourable —.

July 13, 1714.

I cannot tell from any thing in your letter, whether you received a long one from me about a fortnight since. It was principally intended to thank you for the last obliging favour you did me; and perhaps for that reason you pass it in silence. I there launched into some account of my temporal affairs; and I intend now to give you some hints of my spiritual. The conclusion of your letter, in which you tell me you prayed for me, draws this upon me. Nothing can be more kind than the hint you give me of the vanity of human sciences, which, I assure you, I am daily more convinced of; and indeed, I have, for some years past,

looked upon all of them as no better than amusements. To make them the ultimate end of our pursuit, is a miserable and short ambition, which will drop from us at every little disappointment here ; and even, in case of no disappointments here, will infallibly desert us hereafter. The utmost fame they are capable of bestowing, is never worth the pains they cost us, and the time they lose us. If you attain the summit of your desires that way, those who envy you, will do you harm ; and of those who admire you, few will do you good. And at the upshot, after a life of perpetual application, you reflect that you have been doing nothing for yourself : and that the same or less industry might have gained you a friendship, that can never deceive or end ; a satisfaction, which praise cannot bestow, nor vanity feel ; and a glory, which though, in one respect like fame, not to be had till after death, yet shall be felt and enjoyed to eternity. These, dear sir, are unfeignedly my sentiments, whenever I think at all : for half the things that employ our heads, deserve not the name of thoughts ; they are only stronger dreams of impressions upon the imagination. Our schemes of government, our systems of philosophy, our golden worlds of poetry, are all but so many shadowy images, and airy prospects, which arise to us so much the livelier and more frequent, as we are more overcast with the darkness, and disturbed with the fumes of human vanity.

The same thing that makes old men willing to leave this world, makes me willing to leave poetry ; long habit and weariness of the same track. I should be sorry and ashamed, to go on jingling to the last step, like a waggoner's horse, in the same road ; and so leave my bells to the next silly animal that will be proud of them. That man makes a mean figure in the eyes of

Reason, who is measuring syllables and coupling rhymes, when he should be mending his own soul, and securing his own immortality. If I had not this opinion, I should be unworthy even of those small and limited parts which God has given me ; and unworthy of the friendship of such a man as you.

I am your &c.

Alexander Pope.

LETTER IV.

Mr. Pope to Mr. Jervas.

August 16, 1714.

I thank you for your good offices, which are numberless.—I fancy no friendship is so likely to prove lasting as ours, because, I am pretty sure, there never was a friendship of a more easy nature. We neither of us demand any mighty things from each other: what vanity we have, expects its gratification from other people. It is not I who am to tell you what an artist you are, nor is it you who are to tell me what a poet I am! but it is from the world abroad we hope to hear these things. At home we follow our business, when we have any ; and think and talk most of each other when we have none. Our friendship is not unlike that of a staid man and his wife, who are seldom so fond as to hinder the business of the house from going on all day, or so indolent as not to find consolation in each other every evening. Thus, well-meaning couples hold in amity to the last, by not expecting too much from human nature ; while romantic friendships, like violent loves, begin with disquiets, proceed to jealousies, and conclude in animosities. I have lived to see the fierce advancement, the sudden turn, and the abrupt period, of three or four of these enormous friendships : and I am perfectly con-

vinced of the truth of our maxim, that nothing hinders the constant agreement of people who live together, so much as vanity ; a secret insisting upon what they think their dignity of merit ; and an inward expectation of such an over-measure of deference and regard, as answers to their own extravagant false scale ; and which nobody can pay, because none but themselves can tell exactly to what pitch it amounts.

I am, &c.

Alexander Pope.

LETTER V.

Mr. Pope to the hon. Robert Digby.

Dear sir,

The same reason that hindered your writing, hindered mine ; the pleasing expectation of seeing you in town. Indeed, since the willing confinement I have lain under here with my mother, (with whom it is natural and reasonable I should rejoice, as well as grieve,) I could the better bear your absence from London, for I could hardly have seen you there ; and it would not have been quite reasonable to have drawn you to a sick room, from the first embraces of your friends. My mother is now, I thank God, wonderfully recovered ; though not so much as yet to venture out of her chamber, but enough to enjoy a few particular friends, when they have the good-nature to look upon her. I may recommend to you the room we sit in, on one (and that a favourite) account, that it is the very warmest in the house. We and our fires will equally smile upon your face. There is a Persian proverb that says, I think, very prettily ; " The conversation of a friend brightens the eyes." This I take to be a splendour still more agreeable than the fires which you so delightfully describe.

May you long enjoy your own fire-side in the metaphorical sense, that is, all those of your family who make it pleasing to sit and spend whole wintry months together ; a far more rational delight, and better felt by an honest heart, than all the glaring entertainments, numerous lights, and false splendours, of an assembly of empty heads, aching hearts, and false faces ! This is my sincere wish for you and yours.

You say you propose much pleasure in seeing some new faces about town of my acquaintance. I guess you mean Mrs. Howard's, and Mrs. Blount's. And I assure you, you ought to take as much pleasure in their hearts, if they are what they sometimes express with regard to you.

Believe me, dear sir, to you all a very faithful servant,
Alexander Pope.

LETTER VI.

Dr. Atterbury, bishop of Rochester, to Mr. Pope.

Bromley, May 25, 1722.

I had much ado to get hither last night, the water being so rough that the ferrymen were unwilling to venture. The first thing I saw this morning, after my eyes were open, was your letter ; for the freedom and kindness of which I thank you. Let all compliments be laid aside between us for the future ; and depend upon me as your faithful friend in all things within my power, as one who truly values you, and wishes you all manner of happiness. I thank you and your mother for my kind reception ; which has left a pleasing impression upon me, that will not soon be effaced.

Lord —— has pressed me to see him at —— ; and told me, in a manner betwixt kindness and resentment, that it is but a few miles beyond Twickenham.

I have but a little time left, and a great deal to do in it: and I must expect that ill health will render a good share of it useless; and, therefore, what is likely to be left at the foot of the account, ought by me to be cherished, and not thrown away in compliment. You know the motto of my sun-dial; "Vivite, ait, fugio." I will, as far as I am able, follow its advice, and cut off all unnecessary avocations and amusements. There are those who intend to employ me this winter in a way I do not like: if they persist in their intentions, I must apply myself, as well as I can, to the work which they cut out for me. But that shall not hinder me from employing myself also in a way which they do not like; that at last they may be induced to let me be quiet, and live to myself, with the few (the very few) friends I like: for this is the point, the single point, I now aim at; though I know, the generality of the world, who are unacquainted with my intentions and views, think the very reverse of this character belongs to me. I do not know how I have rambled into this account of myself: when I sat down to write, I had no thought of making that any part of my letter.

You might have been sure, without my telling you, that my right hand is at ease, else I should not have overflowed at this rate: and yet I have not done; for there is a kind intimation in the end of yours, which I understood, because it seems to tend towards employing me in something that is agreeable to you. Pray explain yourself, and believe that you have not an acquaintance in the world that would be more in earnest on such an occasion than I; for I love you, as well as esteem you.

All the while I have been writing, pain, and a fine thrush, have been severally endeavouring to call off my attention; but both in vain, nor should I yet part with

you, only that the turning over a new leaf frights me a little, and makes me resolve to break through a new temptation, before it has taken too fast hold on me. I am, &c.

LETTER VII.

Dr. Atterbury to Mr. Pope.

The Tower, April 10, 1723.

Dear sir,

I thank you for all the instances of your friendship, both before and since my misfortunes. A little time will complete them, and separate you and me. But in what part of the world soever I am, I will live mindful of your sincere kindness to me; and I will please myself with the thought, that I still live in your esteem and affection as much as ever I did, and that no accident of life, no distance of time or place, will alter you in that respect. It never can alter me; who have loved and valued you ever since I knew you: and I shall not fail to do it when I am not allowed to tell you so; as the case will soon be.

Give my faithful services to Dr. Arbuthnot, and my thanks for what he sent me, which was much to the purpose, if any thing can be said to be to the purpose, in a case that is already determined. Let him know my defence will be such, that neither my friends need blush for me, nor will my enemies have great occasion of triumph, though they are sure of the victory. I shall want his advice before I go abroad, in many things: but I question whether I shall be permitted to see him, or any body, but such as are absolutely necessary towards the despatch of my private affairs. If so, God bless you both! and may no part of the ill fortune that attends me, ever pursue either of you!

I know not but I may call upon you at my hearing, to say something about my way of spending my time at the Deanery, which did not seem calculated towards managing plots and conspiracies. But of that I shall consider.—You and I have spent many hours together upon much pleasanter subjects: and, that I may preserve the old custom, I shall not part with you now till I have closed this letter with three lines of Milton; which you will, I know, readily, and not without some degree of concern, apply to your ever affectionate, &c.

“Some nat’ral tears he dropp’d, but wip’d them soon :
The world was all before him, where to choose
His place of rest, and Providence his guide.”

LETTER VIII.

Mr. Pope to Dr. Atterbury, in answer to the preceding letter.

April 20, 1723.

It is not possible to express what I think, and what I feel; only this, that I have thought of nothing but you, for some time past; and that I shall think of nothing so long for the time to come. The greatest comfort I had was an intention, to attend you in your journey, to which I had brought that person to consent, who alone could have hindered me, by a tie which, though it may be more tender, I do not think more strong, than that of friendship. But I fear there will be no way left me to tell you this great truth, that I remember you, that I love you, that I am grateful to you, that I value and esteem you most highly.

You prove yourself, my lord, to know me for the friend I am, in judging that the manner of your defence, and your reputation by it, is a point of great concern to me; and, in assuring me it shall be such, that none of

your friends shall blush for you. Let me further prompt you to do yourself the best and most lasting justice: the instruments of your fame to posterity will be in your own hands. May it not be, that Providence has appointed you to some great and useful work, and calls you to it this severe way? You may more eminently and more effectually serve the public, even now, than in the stations which you have so honourably filled.

I am tenderly sensible of the wish you express, that no part of your misfortune may pursue me. But, God knows, I am every day less and less fond of my native country, (torn as it is by party-rage,) and I begin to consider a friend in exile as a friend in death: one gone before, whither I am not unwilling nor unprepared to follow after; and where, however various or uncertain the roads and voyages may be, I cannot but entertain a pleasing hope that we may meet again.

I faithfully assure you, that, in the mean time, there is no one, living or dead, of whom I shall think oftener or better than of you. I shall look upon you as in a state between both, in which you will have from me all the passions and warm wishes that can attend the living, and all the respect and tender sense of loss that we feel for the dead. And I shall ever depend upon your constant friendship, kind memory, and good offices, though I were never to see or hear the effects of them; as we trust in benevolent spirits, who, though we never see or hear them, we think are constantly serving us, and praying for us.

Whenever I am wishing to write to you, I shall conclude you are intentionally doing so to me; and every time that I think of you, I will believe you are thinking of me. I never shall suffer to be forgotten (nay, to be but faintly remembered) the honour, the pleasure, which I

must ever have, in reflecting how frequently you have delighted me, how kindly you have distinguished me, how cordially you have advised me! In conversation, in study, I shall always want you, and wish for you: in my most lively, and in my most thoughtful hours, I shall equally bear about me the impressions of you. And perhaps it will not be in this life only, that I shall have cause to remember and acknowledge the friendship of the bishop of Rochester.

I am, &c.

Alexander Pope.

LETTER IX.

Mr. Pope to Dr. Atterbury.

May, 1723.

Once more I write to you, as I promised; and this once, I fear, will be the last! The curtain will soon be drawn between my friend and me, and nothing left but to wish you a long good night. May you enjoy a state of repose in this life, not unlike that sleep of the soul which some have believed is to succeed it, where we lie utterly forgetful of that world from which we are gone, and ripening for that to which we are to go! If you retain any memory of the past, let it only image to you what has pleased you best; sometimes, present a dream of an absent friend, or bring you back an agreeable conversation. But, upon the whole, I hope you will think less of the time past than of the future; as the former has been less kind to you than the latter I trust will be. Do not envy the world your studies: they will tend to the benefit of men, against whom you can have no complaint,—I mean of all posterity. What is every year of a wise man's life but a censure or critic on the past? Those whose date is the shortest, live

long enough to laugh at one half of it: the boy despises the infant, the man the boy, the philosopher both, and the Christian all. You may now begin to think your manhood was too much a puerility; and you will never suffer your age to be but a second infancy. The toys and bawbles of your childhood are hardly now more below you, than those toys of our riper and of our declining years, the drums and rattles of Ambition, and the dirt and bubbles of Avarice. At this time, when you are cut off from a little society, and made a citizen of the world at large, you should bend your talents not to serve a party, or a few, but all mankind. Your genius should mount above that mist in which its participation and neighbourhood with earth long involved it: to shine abroad, and to Heaven, ought to be the business and the glory of your present situation. Remember, that the greatest lights of antiquity dazzled and blazed the most, in their retreat, in their exile, or in their death: but why do I talk of dazzling or blazing? it was then that they did good, that they gave light, and that they became guides, to mankind.

Those aims alone are worthy of spirits truly great; and such I, therefore, hope will be yours. Resentment indeed may remain, perhaps it cannot be quite extinguished, in the noblest minds; but revenge never will harbour there: higher principles than those of the first, and better principles than those of the latter, will infallibly influence men whose thoughts and whose hearts are enlarged; and cause them to prefer the whole to any part of mankind, especially to so small a part as one's single self.

Believe me, my lord, I look upon you as a spirit entered into another life, as one just upon the edge of immortality: where the passions and affections must be

much more exalted; and where you ought to despise all little views, and all mean retrospects. Nothing is worth your looking back; therefore, look forward: and make (as you can) the world look after you; not with pity, but with esteem and admiration.

I am, with great sincerity, and desire for your fame as well as happiness,

Your &c.

Alexander Pope.

LETTER X.

Dr. Atterbury to Mr. Pope.

Montpelier, Nov. 20, 1729.

Yes, dear sir, I have had all you designed for me; and I have read all, (as I read whatever you write,) with esteem and pleasure: but your last letter, full of friendship and goodness, gave me such impressions of concern and tenderness, as neither I can express, nor you, perhaps, with all the force of your imagination, fully conceive.

I am not yet master enough of myself, after the late wound I have received*, to open my very heart to you; and I am not content with less than that, whenever I converse with you. My thoughts are at present vainly, but pleasingly, employed on what I have lost, and can never recover. I know well I ought, for that reason, to call them off to other subjects; but hitherto I have not been able to do it. By giving them the rein a little, and suffering them to spend their force, I hope in some time to check and subdue them. "Multis fortunæ vulneribus percussus, huic uni me imparem sensi, et penè succubui." This is weakness, not wisdom, I own;

* The death of his beloved and only daughter, Mrs. Morrice.

and on that account the fitter to be trusted to the bosom of a friend, where I may safely lodge all my infirmities. As soon as my mind is in some measure collected and calmed, I will endeavour to follow your advice, and turn it to something of use and moment, if I have still life enough left to do any thing that is worth reading and preserving. In the mean time, I shall be pleased to hear that you proceed in what you intend, without any such melancholy interruptions as I have had. Your mind is as yet unbroken by age and ill accidents; your knowledge and judgment are at the height: use them in writing something that may teach the present and future times. Remember Virgil died at fifty two, and Horace at fifty eight; and bad as both their constitutions were, yours is yet more delicate and tender. Employ not your precious moments, and great talents, on little men and little things: but choose a subject every way worthy of you; and handle it, as you can, in a manner which nobody else can equal or imitate. As for me, my abilities, if I ever had any, are not what they were; and yet I will endeavour to recollect and employ them:

——“*gelidus tardante senecta*

Sanguis hebet, frigentque effæto in corpore vires.”

However, I should be ungrateful to this place, if I did not own that I have gained upon the gout in the South of France much more than I did at Paris, though even there I sensibly improved. I believe my cure had been perfected, but the earnest desire of meeting one whom I dearly loved, called me abruptly to Montpelier: where I continued two months, under the cruel torture of a sad and fruitless expectation; and I was forced at last to take a long journey to Toulouse. And even there

I had missed the person I sought, had she not, with great spirit and courage, ventured all night up the Garonne to see me, which she above all things desired to do before she died. By that means, she was brought where I was, between seven and eight in the morning. She lived twenty hours afterwards : which time was not lost on either side, but passed in such a manner as gave great satisfaction to both ; and such as, on her part, every way became her circumstances and character. She had her senses to the very last gasp ; and she exerted them to give me, in those few hours, greater marks of duty and love than she had done in all her lifetime, though she had never been wanting in either. The last words she said to me, were the kindest of all ; a reflection on the goodness of God, which had allowed us in this manner to meet once more. Not many minutes after that, she laid herself on her pillow, in a sleeping posture,

“ placidaque ibi demum morte quievit.”

Judge, sir, what I felt, and still feel, on this occasion ; and spare me the trouble of describing it. At my age, under my infirmities, among utter strangers, how shall I find out proper reliefs and supports ? I can have none but those with which Reason and Religion furnish me ; and on those I lay hold, and grasp as fast I can. And I hope that HE who laid the burthen upon me, (for wise and good purposes, no doubt,) will enable me to bear it, in like manner as I have borne others, with some degree of fortitude and firmness.

You see how ready I am to relapse into an argument, which I had quitted once before in this letter. I shall probably again commit the same fault, if I continue to write ; and therefore I stop short here, and, with all sincerity, affection, and esteem, bid you adieu, till we meet, either in this world, if God pleases, or else in another !

LETTER XI.

Dr. Arbuthnot to Mr. Pope.

Hampstead, July 17, 1734.

I little doubt your kind concern for me, nor that of the lady whom you mention. I have nothing but prayers and good wishes to repay my friends with at present. I have the satisfaction to find that I am as officiously served by them, as he that has thousands to leave in legacies; besides the assurance of their sincerity. God Almighty has made my bodily distress as easy as a thing of that nature can be. I have found some relief, at least occasionally, from the air of this place. My nights are bad; but many poor creatures have worse.

As for you, my good friend, I think, since our first acquaintance, there have not been any of those little suspicions or jealousies that often affect the sincerest friendships; I am sure, not on my side. I must be so candid as to own, that though I could not help valuing you for those talents which the world prizes, yet they were not the foundations of my friendship: which were quite of another sort; nor shall I at present offend you by enumerating them. And I make it my last request, that you will continue that noble disdain and abhorrence of vice, which you seem naturally endued with; but still with a due regard to your own safety: and that you will study more to reform than chastise, though the one cannot be effected without the other.

Lord Bathurst I have always honoured, for every good quality that a person of his rank ought to have. Pray, give my respects and kindest wishes to the family. My venison stomach is gone; but I have those about

me, and often with me, who will be very glad of his present. If it is left at my house, it will be transmitted safe to me.

A recovery in my case, and at my age, is impossible; the kindest wish of my friends is Euthanasia! Living or dying, I shall always be

Your &c.

John Arbuthnot.

CHAPTER III.

LETTERS OF MRS. ROWE*.

LETTER I.

To the countess of Hertford, afterwards dutchess of Somerset.

Madam,

This is the last letter you will ever receive from me ; the last assurance I shall give you, on earth, of a sincere and steadfast friendship. But, when we meet again, I hope it will be in the heights of immortal love and ecstasy. Mine, perhaps, may be the first glad spirit to congratulate your safe arrival on the happy shores. Heaven can witness the sincerity of my concern for your happiness. Thither I have sent my ardent wishes, that you may be secured from the flattering delusions of the world ; and that, after your pious example has been long a blessing to mankind, you may calmly resign your breath, and enter the confines of unmolested joy !

I am now taking my farewell of you here : it is a short adieu ; for I die with full persuasion that we shall meet again ! but O, in what elevation of happiness ! in what enlargement of mind, and perfection of every faculty ! What transporting reflections shall we make on the advantages of which we shall feel ourselves eternally possessed !

To Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, we shall ascribe immortal glory, dominion, and praise for ever. This is all my salvation, and

* After the death of Mrs. Rowe, these letters were found in her cabinet : she had directed them to be delivered, immediately after her decease, to the persons to whom they were addressed.

all my hope. That name in whom the Gentiles trust, in whom all the families on earth are blessed, is now my glorious, my unfailing confidence : in His merits alone I expect to stand justified before infinite Purity and Justice. How poor were my hopes, if I depended on those works, which my own vanity, or the partiality of men, has called good ; and which, if examined by Divine Purity, would prove, perhaps, but specious sins ! The best actions of my life would be found defective, if brought to the test of that unblemished holiness in whose sight the Heavens are not clean. Where were my hopes, but for a Redeemer's merits and atonement ! how desperate, how undone, my condition ! With the utmost advantages I can boast, I should start back, and tremble, at the thoughts of appearing before the unblemished Majesty.

What a dream is mortal life ! What shadows are the objects of sense ! All the glories of mortality, my beloved friend, will be nothing in your view, at the awful hour of death, when you must be separated from the whole creation, and enter on the borders of the immaterial world. May that Divine protection, whose care I implore, keep you steadfast in the faith of Christianity, and guide your steps in the strictest paths of virtue !

Adieu, my most dear friend, till we meet in the paradise of God !

Elizabeth Rowe.

LETTER II.

To the earl of Orrery.

My lord,

There seems to be something presaging in the message that you desired me to deliver to your

charming Henrietta *, when I should meet her gentle spirit in the blissful regions ; which I believe will be very soon. I am now acting the last part of life ; and composing myself to meet the universal Terror, with a fortitude becoming the principles of Christianity. It is only through the great Redeemer's merits and atonement, that I hope to pass undaunted through the fatal darkness.

Before him death, the grisly tyrant, flies :

He wipes the tears for ever from our eyes.

All human greatness makes no figure in my present apprehension ; every distinction vanishes, but that of virtue and real merit. It is this which gives a peculiar regard for such a character as yours ; and makes me hope your example will not fall short of that of your illustrious ancestors. The approaches of death set the world in a true light ; its brightest advantages appear no more than a dream, in that solemn period. The immortal mind, perhaps, will quit a cottage with less regret than it would leave the splendour of a palace ; and the breathless dust sleep as quietly beneath the grassy turf, as under the parade of a costly monument. These are insignificant circumstances to a spirit doomed to an endless duration of misery or of bliss. It is this important concern, my lord, that has induced me to spend my time in a peaceful retirement, rather than to waste it in a train of thoughtless amusements. My mind is grown familiar with the solemnity of dying ; and death seems to advance, not as an inflexible tyrant, but as the peaceful messenger of liberty and happiness. May I make my exit in that elate manner which these charming lines of Mr. Pope describe !

* The countess of Orrery.

"The world recedes, it disappears ;
 Heav'n opens on my eyes ; my ears
 With sounds seraphic ring :
 Lend, lend your wings ! I mount ! I fly !
 O grave ! where is thy victory ?
 O death ! where is thy sting ?"

The nearer I am approaching to immortality, the more extensive and enlarged I find the principles of amity and good-will in my soul ; hence arise the most sincere wishes for your happiness, and that of the charming pledges your lovely Henrietta left. O ! my lord, if you would discharge the sacred trust, keep them under your own inspection.

This letter will not reach you, my lord, before I am past the ceremony of subscribing myself,

Your humble servant,

Elizabeth Rowe.

LETTER III.

To Mr. James Theobald.

Sir,

The converse I have had with you has been very short ; but I hope the friendship begun by it, will be transmitted to the regions of perfect amity and bliss. It would scarcely be worth the while to cherish the impressions of a virtuous friendship, if the generous engagement were to be dissolved with mortal life ; such a thought would give the grave a deeper gloom, and add new horrors to the fatal darkness.

But, I confess, I have brighter expectations : and I am fully persuaded that those noble attachments which are founded on real merit, are of an immortal date ; that benignity, that divine charity, which just warms the soul in these cold regions, will shine with new lustre,

and burn with an eternal ardour, in the happy seats of peace and love.

My present experience confirms me in this truth. The powers of nature are drooping; the vital spark grows languid and faint: but my affection for my surviving friends was never more warm; my concern for their happiness was never more ardent.

This makes me employ some of the last part of my time in writing to three or four persons, whose merit requires my esteem, in hopes that this solemn farewell will leave a serious impression on their minds.

I am going to act the last and most important part of human life: in a little time, I shall land on the immortal coasts, where all is new, amazing, and unknown. But, however gloomy the passage appears,

“ Sweet fields, beyond the swelling flood,
Stand dress'd in living green :
So to the Jews old Canaan stood,
While Jordan roll'd between.”

Nature cannot but shiver on the fatal brink, unwilling to try the grand experiment; whilst the hopes of Christianity alone can support the soul in the solemn crisis. In this exigence, the eternal Spirit whispers peace and pardon to the dying saint, through the atonement; and brightens the shadow of death with some glimmering of immortal light.

Tell Mrs. Theobald I hope to meet her in the shining realms of love and unmingled bliss ;

“ Where crown'd with joy and ever-blooming youth,
The jocund hours hold on their endless round.”

Elizabeth Rowe.

LETTER IV.

To Mrs. Rowe, her mother-in-law.

My dear mother,

I am now taking my final adieu of this world, with an assured hope of meeting you in the next. I carry to my grave my affection and gratitude to you ; and I leave you with the sincerest concern for your own happiness, and the welfare of your family. May my prayers be answered, when I am sleeping in the dust ! O, may the angels of God conduct you in the paths of immortal glory and pleasure ! I would collect the powers of my soul, and ask blessings for you with all the holy violence of prayer. God Almighty, the God of your pious ancestors, who has been your dwelling place for many generations, bless you !

It is but a short space I have to measure ; the shadows are lengthening, and my sun is declining. That goodness which has hitherto conducted me, will not fail me in the last concluding act of life : that Name which I have made my glory and my boast, shall then be my strength and my salvation. To meet death with a becoming fortitude, is a part above the powers of nature ; and which I can perform by no strength or holiness of my own ; for oh ! in my best estate I am altogether vanity ; a wretched, helpless sinner ! But in the merits and perfect righteousness of God my saviour, I hope to appear justified at the supreme tribunal, where I must shortly stand to be judged.

Elizabeth Rowe.

LETTER V.

To Dr Watts.

Sir,

The opinion I have of your piety and judgment, is the reason of my giving you the trouble of looking over these papers*; in order to publish them; which I desire you to do as soon as you can conveniently: only you have full liberty to suppress what you judge proper.

I think there can be no vanity in this design; for I am sensible such thoughts as these will not be to the taste of the modish part of the world; and before they appear, I shall be entirely disinterested in the censure or applause of mortals.

The reflections were occasionally written, and only for my own improvement; but I am not without hopes that they may have the same effect on some pious minds, as the reading of the experience of others has had on my own soul. The experimental part of religion has generally a greater influence than its theory; and if, when I am sleeping in the dust, these soliloquies should kindle a flame of divine love in the heart of the lowest and most despised Christian, be the glory given to the great Spring of all grace and benignity!

I have now done with mortal things, and all to come is vast eternity!—Eternity! how transporting is the sound! As long as God exists, my being and happiness are secure. These unbounded desires, which the wide creation cannot limit, shall be satisfied for ever. I shall drink at the fountain-head of pleasure, and be refreshed with the emanations of Original Life and Joy. I shall

* Devout Exercises of the Heart,

hear the voice of uncreated Harmony, speaking peace and ineffable consolation to my soul.

I expect eternal life, not as a reward of merit, but a pure act of bounty. Detesting myself in every view I can take, I fly to the righteousness and atonement of my great Redeemer for pardon and salvation ; this is my only consolation and hope. " Enter not into judgment, O Lord, with thy servant ; for, in thy sight, shall no man living be justified."

Through the blood of the Lamb, I hope for an entire victory over the last enemy : and that before this letter comes to you, I shall have reached the celestial heights ; and that, while you are reading these lines, I shall be adoring before the throne of God, where faith shall be turned into vision, and these languishing desires satisfied with the full fruition of immortal love.

Adieu !

Elizabeth Rowe,

CHAPTER IV.

LETTERS OF DR. RUNDLE, BISHOP OF DERRY.

LETTER I.

To Mrs. Sandys.

February 15, 1737.

Oh, Madam ! the chancellor, the best man that ever breathed, the best judge, the best father, the best friend, is dead* !—What, in his providence, does the Almighty design to do, in merited severity, to punish this nation, by removing from it the person, who, by his wisdom and goodness united, was able and desirous to save it, to make it honest and happy ! I dread to consider and foresee !—What has the public lost ! what has his dear, deserving family ! what have I ! what have I not lost !

He died yesterday morning. His illness was an inflammation on his lungs. He continued only from Thursday, till five in the morning on Monday. The physicians say, to comfort us, and to excuse themselves, or rather their ignorance, that he was worn out in the service of his country, and that he could not have lasted any time, had not this cold carried him off. He was but fifty one ; he might have blessed, and done good to

* Charles Talbot, lord high chancellor of England, died Feb. 14, 1737, universally lamented. He was allowed by all parties, to have possessed great talents and unblemished integrity. Thomson published a poem to his memory ; which is replete with gratitude, and contains an elegant delineation of a most amiable and exalted character.

his country, many years longer. But GOD ALMIGHTY knows what is best for him, and properest for us. May HE, in his anger, remember mercy !

All parties unite to call the chancellor the best and the greatest man that ever lived ! The people, from the court to the city, are under the deepest astonishment, and show in their countenance that the nation is under some dreadful calamity. Great as he was allowed to be in his public character, you know he was more amiable, more delightful, in his domestic behaviour. Was there ever any man so reasonably beloved as himself, by all, from the highest to the lowest, in his family ? Did his children ever enjoy more ease, more cheerfulness, more sprightly innocence, and entertaining, instructive unbendings, than in his company and conversation ?

Oh, madam ! what a series of disappointments is life ! I came over to enjoy the company of the best friend that ever lived : I saw him ; I had daily new reasons to love and admire him ; I received daily new obligations ; and I have lost him ! I hoped, by enjoying his wisdom and virtue for a few months, to return with spirit, and support absence from him by the reflection of my having been with him, and that I might be with him again. Farewell all hope that my splendid banishment from my native country shall ever have an end ! I must now withdraw ; and sigh out my few remaining years in solitude, amidst strange company, since every place that I am hereafter to inhabit, will be empty of all, with whom I have contracted the sacred ties of friendship !— My poor, dear Billy ! what does he suffer ! You have seen him in agonies of fear, lest he should lose what he loves. He has now lost what he loves above all things upon earth united ; and what deserved his unexampled affection. I shall rejoice that I was in England when

this fatal accident happened, if I can be of any comfort, any use, to that ever beloved youth !

In the last six years, how many friends have you and I lost in one family ! and such friends, as the world can scarcely parallel ! the bishop of Durham, doctor Sayer, Mrs Sayer, and her brother, and his son !—They are happy : let us imitate them, and we shall be so too. We shall meet them again, no more to be separated ; we shall enjoy their friendship again, no more to be clouded with tears : or we shall be admitted to a degree of happiness, (how inconceivable must that degree of happiness be !) to which even their company can be no addition.

You, madam, will share our affliction severely : but the letter, which brings you word that you have lost one friend who loved you, will remind you that there are others who do so too, whilst there is a Talbot left in this nation, or I am alive to subscribe myself

Your affectionate friend,

Thomas Derry.

LETTER II.

To Mrs. Sandys.

February 22, 1737.

Madam,

When I wrote to you last I was under such amazement, and agony, that I do not know what I might say to you ; but you will excuse the overflowings of my heart, in its deepest sorrow. In no moment of my life, shall I be less sensible of our loss than at present : but though it is impossible to be unmoved at the reflection, that we have been deprived of the noblest happiness which Providence had bestowed on us ; yet frequent meditation on the unequalled virtues of our friend, will hange grief into veneration, and raise and consecrate the pious melancholy into a solemn enjoyment, to be preferred to pleasure.

All parties are striving, in their public papers, which shall profess the highest esteem and honour for him ; and they mention his behaviour in his great office, with the warmest gratitude and applause. These praises, which prove the greatness of our misfortune, bring, at the same time, a consolation with them. It gives me a lovely view of mankind, to observe, that they can drop their prejudices, and unite to reverence a truly great and admirable character. Nothing is universally popular but goodness ! And every action of his life, in public or private, towards his friends or his enemies, flowed from that divine principle, in which alone we can obey that sublime precept of our Lord, (the sublimest that can be given to men or angels,) " Be ye perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect." Did I say his enemies ? —he had none ; he hated none but ill men ; nay, even for them, he felt not hatred, but pity.

It has been observed, that the world seldom does justice to characters, till after men have been some time dead ; but it has not been so now. The chancellor was dear to his prince and to the people, whilst he lived ; and he is equally mourned by both, as soon as he is dead. He was trusted by the prince, as his most faithful and zealous servant ; and regarded by the jealous nation, as the warmest and most intrepid lover of their liberties : both thought their rights secure in his hands. To be a popular minister of state, is a felicity scarcely before exemplified. But though scarcely before exemplified, nothing seems more easy to any person, who has his abilities, and the will to imitate his integrity.

You knew the chancellor, and loved him as well as I have done ; but had I been writing to a stranger, I should have soothed my concern, by transcribing a sketch of his life. I could repeat almost every action, from his childhood to his death : and show that he was

uniform in his progress to virtue, and steadfastly adhered to the severest of her precepts ; severe, in the judgment of the many, but to him an uninterrupted source of cheerfulness and tranquillity. I could mention such instances of filial piety, as would be hardly believed by others ; you know them to be true. How amiable a husband he was ! how tender and generous a parent ! His sons have often said, he never refused either of them any thing in his life ; but that is their own, as well as his praise. He lived with them as a brother and a friend ; familiarized his wisdom into chit chât ; and instructed them more effectually by common conversation, than others could do by solemn precepts. The nation, by their common sorrow, show what a judge and statesman they have lost. My name will be ever a proof to posterity, how warm and intrepid a friend he could be to one whom he thought fit to honour and reward with that dear and voluntary relation to him. His distressed and melancholy family show what a master he was to them all. In all these various relations, he was superior to any person whom I ever knew, or of whom I ever read.

The day before he died, he said to his son John : " It is indifferent and equal as to myself, whether I die now, or some years hence ; but it will not be the same to you : for the sake of my children, I could be pleased to remain longer with them." The night he died, his servants offered him a medicine ; " It is in vain," he answered : " death cannot be resisted. God's will be done ! I am satisfied !" He immediately fell into a calm sleep ; continued three hours in it ; then awaked, looked round him a few moments ; and died without the least struggle or pain.

His distemper was an inflammation on the lungs. The natural cure of it is large bleeding ; but, on taking from him only eight ounces, he sunk so much, that the

doctor durst not proceed.—On opening him, a large polypus was found in his heart. Thence, probably, proceeded his not being able to lose blood. A polypus, say physicians, is the effect of care and intenseness of thought; if that is so, no man ever did more to cause it. He sacrificed his life for the good of others; and who will not envy a death so glorious? He lived enough to make himself beloved, whilst living; and revered and lamented by good men of every party and denomination, now he is gone. He lived to perfect his temper to a love of goodness, and adorn it with every Christian, as well as natural grace, that can make virtue either divine or amiable!

I am, madam,

Your most obliged, humble servant,

Thomas Derry.

LETTER III.

To Archdeacon S——.

Dublin, March 22, 1743.

Dear sir,

Adieu!—Perhaps I may be alive when these lines come to your hands:—more probably not!—Believe me, my friend, there is no comfort in this world, but a life of virtue and piety; and no death supportable, but one comforted by Christianity, and its real and rational hope. The first, I doubt not, you experience daily: may it be long before you experience the second!—I have passed through good report and evil report: I have not been injured more than outwardly, by the last; and I have been solidly benefited by the former.—May all who love the truth in Christ Jesus, and sincerely obey the Gospel, be happy!

Adieu!—I have no more strength.—My affectionate, last adieu to your lady!

Thomas Derry.

CHAPTER V.

LETTERS OF MR. (AFTERWARDS LORD) LYTTTELTON.

LETTER I.

To his father.

January 17, 1747.

Dear sir,

It is a most sensible and painful addition to my concern and affliction for my dear wife, to hear of your being so ill with the stone; and, loaded as my heart is with my other grief, I cannot help writing, to tell you how much I feel for you, and how ardently I pray to God to relieve you.

Last night all my thoughts were employed on you; for, when I went to bed, my poor Lucy was so much better, that we thought her in a fair way of recovery: but my uneasiness for you kept me awake great part of the night; and, in the morning, I found she had been much worse, so that our alarm was as great as ever. She has since mended again, and she is now pretty nearly as you heard by the last post; only that such frequent relapses give one more cause to fear that the good symptoms, which sometimes appear, will not be lasting. On the other hand, by her struggling so long, and her pulse recovering itself so well as it does, after these violent flurries, and great sinkings, one would hope that nature is strong in her, and will be able at last, to conquer her illness. Sir Edward Hulse seems now inclined to trust to *that*, and to trouble her with no more physic. Upon the whole, her case is full of uncertainty, and the doctors can pronounce nothing positively about her; but they rather think it will be an affair of time.

H

My own health is yet tolerably good, though my heart has gone through as severe a trial as it can well sustain; more indeed than I thought it could have borne. You may be assured, dear sir, I will make use of all the supports that religion or reason can give me, to save me from sinking under it. I know the interest you take in my life and health: and I know it is my duty to try not to add to your other pains that of my loss; which thought has as great an effect upon me as any thing can. And I believe God Almighty supports me above my own strength, for the sake of my friends who are concerned for me; and in return for the resignation with which I endeavour to submit to his will. If it please him, in his infinite mercy, to restore my dear wife to me, I shall most thankfully acknowledge his goodness; if not, I shall most humbly endure his chastisement, which I have too much deserved.

These are the sentiments with which my mind is replete: but, as it is still a most bitter cup, how my body will bear it, if it must not pass from me, is impossible for me to foretell. I hope the best.

Gilbert West would be happy in the reputation his book has gained him, if my poor Lucy were not so ill. However, his mind leans always to hope; which is an advantage both to him and me, as it makes him a better comforter. To be sure, we ought not yet to despair; but there is much to fear, and a most melancholy interval to be supported, before any certainty comes.—God send it may come well at last!

I am, dear sir,

Your most afflicted, but most affectionate son,

George Lyttelton.

LETTER II.

To Dr. Doddridge.

Hagley, Oct. 5, 1751.

Dear sir,

My concern was so great on the account I received from the bishop of Worcester of the ill state of your health, that in the midst of my grief for the death of my father, when I had scarcely performed my last duties to him, I wrote to you at Bristol ; which letter, I find, you never received. Indeed, my dear friend, there are few losses I should more sensibly feel than yours, if it should please God to take you from us. But, I trust, he will be so gracious to your family and your friends, as to prolong your life, and defer your reward for some time longer. And I am persuaded, no human means can be found better than that which has been prescribed to you of removing to Lisbon, and passing the winter in that mild climate: only let me entreat you to lay by all studies while you are there ; for too much application (and a very little in your state is too much) would frustrate the benefit which we may hope from the change of air. The complying with this injunction, will be the best recompense you can make Mrs. Doddridge for all the obligations you have to her ; and if I have any authority with you, as I flatter myself I have, I would employ it all to enforce this upon you, for I do indeed think your life will depend upon it. You have, I believe, brought on your illness by continual study and labour ; and an entire remission of mind is absolutely necessary for your recovery.

My father met death with a noble firmness, and an assured hope of a blessed immortality ; so that our thoughts are raised above our grief, and fixed much.

more on the example he has left us, than on the loss we have sustained. It is also a comfort to us, that, upon his body being opened, as he ordered it should be, we find the cause of his violent pains was of such a nature as death alone could remove or relieve.

Let me know by every mail how you do ; and depend upon it, that if Providence shall call you away to the crown prepared for you, nothing in my power shall be wanting, as long as I live, to show the affection I had for you, in my regard to your widow and family ; but, I hope, your life will be preserved to be an ornament to the Christian church, and a support of religion in these bad times. May God Almighty grant it ; and may we meet again, with the pleasure which friends restored to each other, feel after so alarming a parting ! But if that be denied, may we meet in the next world to part no more, through His power, who will, I trust, blot out my offences, and make me worthy to be a partaker with you of his heavenly kingdom !

I am, with the tenderest regard and affection, dear sir,

Your most faithful friend and servant,

George Lyttelton.

CHAPTER VI.

LETTERS OF THE DUTCHESS OF SOMERSET.

LETTER I.

To lady Luxborough.

Piercy Lodge, Dec. 31, 1751.

Dear madam,

Apologies between friends are unnecessary ; so that if you have still the inclination which you have formerly shown, to look upon me in that light, you will never again treat me with the ceremony of a formal acquaintance. When you write to me, you give me pleasure ; when you do not, I love my own peace too well, to fancy you are angry with me, while I am not conscious of my deserving to have you so. You see I do not regulate my correspondence as poor lady ——— did her visits ; which she never was to return sooner than her former ones had been repaid.

I am not in the least surprised that you were pleased to return to the venerable seat of your ancestors, and the abode of your first and happiest days : and I find nothing trivial or childish in the satisfaction you felt, in seeing old faces full of gratitude for obligations long since past, and by you, perhaps, forgotten ; or in recalling some lively little incidents in the earliest hours of youth. As for the wise and witty of the present age, I know not what they would say ; and I do not design to hear it. They will scarcely visit my hermitage ; and I shall not leave it to visit them. I hope to dispose of my house in Downing-street ; which I would not do, if I ever intended to pass six weeks in London, for I like the situa-

tion. But I find myself happiest in the retreat of which my dear lord's unmerited beneficence has made me mistress. He has fixed my home upon the spot of earth I would have chosen for myself. Every thing both within and without the house, reminds me of my obligations to him ; and I cannot turn my eyes upon any object, which is not an object of his goodness to me. The satisfaction I take in adding either beauty or convenience to my habitation, is greatly enhanced by the reflection, that, while I am adorning it, I show my value for the gift, and my gratitude to the lamented giver.

I have a regular, and, I hope, a religious family. My woman, though she has not lived with me quite three years, had before lived twenty three betwixt lord Grantham's and lady Cowper's ; my housekeeper has been a servant as long ; the person who takes in my accounts, pays the bills, and overlooks the men within doors, has been in the family nineteen years ; and the other, who has the care of the stables, and of every thing without, has lived with us ten years. I rise at seven, but I do not go down till nine, when the bell rings, and my whole family meet me at chapel. After prayers, we go to breakfast : any friend who happens to be with me, my chaplain, and myself, have ours in the little library ; the rest in their respective eating rooms. About eleven, if the weather permits, we go and walk in the park, or take the air in the coach ; but if it is too bad for either, we return to our various occupations. At three we dine ; sit perhaps an hour afterwards, and then separate. We meet at eight for prayers ; after which we adjourn again to the library, where somebody usually reads aloud, till half an hour past nine, when we sup ; and we always part before eleven. This to the gay world, would seem a melancholy, monastic life. I cannot be

supposed to have chosen it, from ignorance of the splendour and gaiety of a court, but from a thorough experience that they can give no solid happiness; and I find myself more calmly pleased in my present way of living, and more contented, than I ever was in the bloom and pomp of my youth. I am no longer dubious what point to pursue. There is but one proper for the decline of life; and indeed the only one worth the anxiety of a rational creature at any age: but how do the fire of youth, and the flattery of the world, blind our eyes, and mislead our fancies after a thousand imaginary pleasures, which are sure to disappoint us in the end!

I condole with you on the loss of Mr. Price; for a faithful servant is always a valuable possession.

I dare say, lady Northumberland did not know how near she was to you, or she would not have passed by, without inquiring after you. Her little boy is called Algernon, after his grand-papa: and he is, though less handsome, the counterpart of his uncle, lord Beauchamp; his innocence, his temper, and his voice, are just the same, and every motion of his body; judge if I am fond of him.

I have hardly room to subscribe myself, dear madam,
ever faithfully yours,

Frances Somerset.

LETTER H.

To lady Luxborough.

Piercy Lodge. Nov. 23, 1753.

I did, indeed, dear madam, begin to despair of having the honour, and (what I felt more sensibly) the pleasure, of hearing from you again. I am so subject to fall into errors, that I was afraid some unguarded expression in my last letter had given you offence; and

yet my heart bore witness, how far I had been from intending it.

I have been extremely ill, the whole summer, and for some weeks I was believed to be in great danger ; but, by the blessing of God upon Dr. Shaw's prescriptions, I am at present, though lean and ill-favoured, much better. I am still obliged to be carried up and down stairs, for want of strength and breath to carry myself : but I have great reason to bless God for the ease I now enjoy. When we come to the last broken arches of Mirza's bridge, rest from pain must bound our ambition, for pleasure we cannot expect in this world : where I have no more a notion of laying schemes, to be executed six months, than I have six years hence ; which, I believe, helps to keep my spirits in an even state of cheerfulness, to enjoy the satisfactions that present themselves, without anxious solicitude about their duration. We have lived to an age that necessarily shows us the earth crumbling under our feet ; and, as our journey seems approaching towards the verge of life, is it not more natural to cast our eyes to the prospect beyond it, than, by a retrospective view, to recall the troublesome trifles that made our road difficult or dangerous ?

I have spent the last three weeks very agreeably. The first of them the bishop of Oxford and Mrs. Talbot passed with us ; and when they went away, they had the goodness to leave miss Talbot, whose character I think you must have heard. She is all that the world has said of her, as to an uncommon share of understanding : but she has other charms, which I imagine you will join with me in giving the preference even to that ; a mild and equal temper, an unaffectedly pious heart, and a universal good will to her fellow-creatures. She censures nobody ; she despises nobody ; and, whilst her own

life is a pattern of goodness, she does not exclaim with bitterness against vice. We spend a good deal of the day in our own rooms ; but our time is much broken in upon. Soon after nine we meet in the chapel ; when prayers are over, we go to breakfast, after that we work, whilst Mr. Cowslad, or my chaplain, reads aloud. At eleven we go, if the weather is tolerable, to take the air for two hours at least, which Dr. Shaw insists upon my doing. The moment we get out of the coach, we see no more of one another till three, when the dinner is punctually upon the table. We retire at five. At eight, we go to prayers ; after which we adjourn into the little library, where we work till supper, and the gentlemen read to us, as in the morning ; and it is a rule to be all in our rooms a quarter before eleven.

It is now more than time to return you thanks for the trouble you have taken in conveying to me Mr. Shensstone's poem. I have written to him by this post. I could not write sooner, because his letter was only dated Leasowes ; and I could not find out his post-town, without sending to Mrs. Stanley, whom I do not visit, and who lives twelve miles from me. I have expressed my gratitude in the best manner I am able ; but I am under the necessity of declining the honour which he intended me. I have begged him to fill up the blanks with stars, or what he pleases, when ever my name, or that of Piercy Lodge, was designed ; and I hope he will oblige me.

I am, dear madam,

Your most obliged and obedient servant,

Frances Somerset.

CHAPTER VII.

LETTERS TO AND FROM DR. WARBURTON, BISHOP
OF GLOUCESTER.

LETTER I.

Dr. Warburton to Dr. Doddridge.

February 14, 1743.

Dear sir,

I should not have been so long in making my best acknowledgments for your last kind letter, had not my absence from home, and a late unhappy domestic affair, prevented me, and engrossed all my thoughts,—the misfortunes of an excellent sister and her children, by her husband's ill success in trade, though attended to with the utmost honesty and sobriety. He has been a considerable benefactor to the public; and his creditors are at last no losers, but he himself is undone. I do not know whether this is an alleviation, or an aggravation, of the misfortune. But I can tell you with the utmost truth, that I share with this distressed sister and her children (who all live with me) the small revenue it has pleased God to bless me with; and this I do with much greater satisfaction than others spend theirs on their pleasures. I can assure you my chief concern on this occasion, was for an incomparable mother, whom I feared the misfortunes of a favourite daughter would too much affect. But, I thank God, religion, that religion of which you make so amiable drawings in all your works, was more than a support to her.—This is a subject I never choose to talk of; yet I could not forbear mentioning it to a man whom I much esteem, and whose heart I know to be right.

It was with great concern I found Mrs. Doddridge so ill at Bath. I know the grief this must have occasioned you. But I know your sufficiency. I trust in God she has by this time received the expected benefit from the waters. It was by accident that I saw her name in Leake's book, (for then I had not received your last letter,) a little before I left Mr. Allen's. I visited her twice. The first time, she was going out to drink the waters; the second time, a visiting: so I had not the pleasure of much of her company. You may be assured, I would not hinder her the first time; and I made a conscience not to do it the second: for it was a new acquaintance she was going to make; a matter perhaps as useful to her amusement, while she stayed at Bath, as the other for her health.

Thus you see, my good friend, we have all something to make us think less complacently of the world. Religion will do great things. It will always make the bitter waters of Marah wholesome and palatable. But we must not think it will usually turn water to wine, because it once did so. Nor is it fit it should, unless this were our place of rest. I do the best I can, and I should, I think, do the same, if I were a mere pagan, to make life passable. To be always lamenting the miseries of it, or always seeking after the pleasures of it, equally takes us off from the work of our salvation. And though I am extremely cautious what sect I follow in religion, yet any in philosophy will serve my turn, and honest Sancho Panca's is as good as any; who, on his return from an important commission, when asked by his master whether they should mark the day with a *black* or a *white* stone, replied: "Sir, if you will be ruled by me, with neither; but with *good brown ochre*." What this philosopher thought of his commission, I

think of human life in general ; *good brown ochre* is the complexion of it.

I returned home a little before Christmas, after a charming philosophical retirement, for two or three months, in a palace, with Mr. Pope and Mr. Allen. The gentleman whom I mentioned last, is, I verily believe, the greatest private character that ever appeared in any age of the world. You see his munificence to the Bath Hospital. This is but a small part of his charities ; and charity but a small part of his virtues. I have studied his character even maliciously, to find where his weakness lies ; but I have studied in vain. When I know it, the world shall know it too, for the consolation of the envious ; especially as I suspect it will prove to be only a partiality which he has entertained for me. In a word, I firmly believe him to have been sent by Providence into the world, to teach men what blessings they may expect from Heaven, would they study to deserve them *.

* Mr. Allen rose to great consideration by farming the cross posts ; which, very much to the public advantage, as well as his own, he put into the admirable order in which we now find them. He was of so generous a nature, that his mind enlarged with his fortune ; and the wealth which he thus honourably acquired, he spent in a splendid hospitality, and in the most extensive charities. His house, in so public a scene as that of Bath, was open to men of rank and worth, and especially to men of distinguished parts and learning ; whom he honoured and encouraged, and whose respective merits he was enabled to appreciate, by a natural discernment and superior good sense, rather than by any acquired use and knowledge of letters. His domestic virtues were above all praise. With these qualities, he drew to himself universal respect ; and possessed, in a high degree, the esteem of Mr. Pope, who, in the following lines, has done justice to his modest and amiable character.

“ Let humble Allen, with an awkward shame,
Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame.”

I received your present of your pupil's Sermons, with your Life of him, which my nephew has read with great pleasure ; and you have our most hearty thanks for it. He is now of Jesus College in Cambridge. But I take what care I can myself of his education. He is very promising ; and I hope he will prove a comfort to an excellent, though unfortunate mother.

I have not a moment more than to assure you, with my best respects to Mrs. Doddridge, that I am, dear sir,

Your most affectionate friend and brother,
William Warburton.

LETTER II.

Dr. Warburton to Dr. Doddridge.

Prior Park, Sept. 2, 1751.

Dear sir,

Your kind letter gave me, and it will give Mr. Allen, great concern ;—for ourselves, not for you. Death, whenever it happens, in a life spent like yours, is to be envied, not pitied ; and you will have the prayers of your friends, as conquerors have the shouts of the crowd. God preserve you ! if he continues you here, to go on in his service ; if he takes you to himself, to be crowned with glory.

I order an inquiry to be made of your health, from time to time ; but if you fatigue yourself any more in writing, it will prevent me that satisfaction.

I am, dear sir,

Your most affectionate friend and brother,
William Warburton.

LETTER III.

Dr. Hurd to Dr. Warburton.

Cambridge, July 2, 1754.

Rev. sir,

I thank you for your kind favour of the twenty seventh past. Sir Edward Lyttelton thought himself so much honoured by your notice of him, that I knew it could not be long before he found or made an occasion to acknowledge it. I am very happy in your candid opinion of him. He has the highest esteem and veneration for you.

As you give me no hopes of seeing the excellent family here, I shall set forward directly for Shifnal, in Shropshire; where I propose staying till the end of the month, and I shall then return, by the way of sir Edward Lyttelton's, to Cambridge.

Mr. Balguy is to meet me there, on invitation, from Buxton.—But if there were not more in the matter, I believe my laziness would find pretences to excuse me from the trouble of this long journey. The truth is, I go to pass some time with two of the best people in the world, to whom I owe the highest duty, and have all possible obligation.

I believe I never told you how happy I am in an excellent father and mother: very plain people; they are farmers, but of a turn of mind that might have honoured any rank and any education. With very tolerable, but in no degree affluent circumstances, their generosity was such, they never regarded any expense that was in their power, and almost out of it, in whatever concerned the welfare of their children. We are three brothers of us. The eldest settled very reputably in their own way, and the youngest in the Birmingham trade. For myself, a

poor scholar, as you know, I am almost ashamed to own to you how solicitous they always were to furnish me with all the opportunities of the best and most liberal education. My case in so many particulars resembles that which the Roman poet describes as his own, that with Pope's wit I could apply almost every circumstance of it to myself. And if ever I were to wish in earnest to be a poet, it would be for the sake of doing justice to so uncommon a virtue. I should be a wretch if I did not conclude, as he does,

" Si Natura juberet

A certis annis ævum remeare peractum,
Atque alios legere ad fastum quosunque parentes,
Optaret sibi quisque ; meis contentus, onustos
Fascibus et sellis nolim mihi sumere : demens
Judicio vulgi, sanus fortasse tuo."

In a word, when they had fixed us in such a rank of life as they designed, and believed would satisfy us, they very wisely left the business of the world to those who wanted it more, or liked it better. They considered what age and declining health seemed to demand of them, reserving to themselves only such a support as their few and little wants made them think sufficient. I should beg pardon for troubling you with this humble history ; but the subjects of it are so much, and so tenderly, in my thoughts at present, that if I wrote at all, I could hardly help writing about them.

I shall long to hear that you have put the last hand to the "View of Bolingbroke." If ever you write above yourself, it is when your zeal for truth and religion animates you to expose the "ignorance of foolish men."

I am ever most warmly, &c.

Richard Hurd.

LETTER IV.

Dr. Hurd to Dr. Warburton.

Shifnal, Sept. 13, 1755.

Your truly friendly letter of the thirty first past, brought me all the relief I am capable of in my present situation. Yet that relief had been greater if the fact were, as you suppose, that the best of fathers is removing from me, in this maturity of age, by a gradual, insensible decay of nature ; in which case, I could have drawn to myself much ease from the considerations which you so kindly suggest to me. But it is not his being out of all hope of recovery, (which I knew long since, and was prepared for,) but his being in perpetual pain, that afflicts me so much. I left him last night in this distressful condition. So near a prospect of death, and so rough a passage to it!—I own to you I cannot be a witness of this in one whom nature and ten thousand obligations have made so dear to me, without the utmost uneasiness. Nay, I think, my sense of the calamity is sharpened by the very temper and firmness of mind with which he bears it. I thank God, an attachment to this world has not as yet been among my vices. But were I as fond of it, as prosperous and happy men sometimes are, what I have seen and felt for this last month were enough to mortify such foolish affections. And in truth it would amaze one, that a few instances like this, which hardly any man is out of the reach of, did not strike dead all the passions, were it not that Providence has determined, in spite of ourselves, by means of these instincts, to accomplish his own great purposes. But why do I trouble my best friend with this sad tale, and these rambling reflections? I designed only to tell him that I am quite unhappy here, and that, though it is more than

time for me to return to Cambridge, I have no power of coming to a thought of leaving this place. However, a very few weeks, perhaps a few days, may put an end to this irresolution.

I thank you for your fine observation on the neglect to reform the Ecclesiastical Laws. It is a very material one, and deserves to be well considered: but of these matters, when I return to my books, and my mind is more easy.

I wish you all the happiness this world will admit. I know of nothing that reconciles me more to it, than the sense of having in it such a friend as you. I have the greatest obligations to Mrs. Warburton and the rest of your family for their kind condolence. My best respects and sincere good wishes attend them.

I must ever be &c.

Richard Hurd.

LETTER V.

Dr. Hurd to Dr. Warburton.

Cambridge, Dec. 1, 1755.

I have to tell you that it has pleased God to release my father from his great misery. You will guess the rest, when I acquaint you that his case was cancerous. All his family have great reason to be thankful for his deliverance: and yet I find myself not so well prepared for the stroke as I had thought.

He was the best of men in all relations; and had a generosity of mind that was amazing in his rank of life. In his long and great affliction he showed a temper which philosophers only talk of. If he had any foible, it was, perhaps, his too great fondness for the unworthiest of his sons.—My mother is better than could be expected from her melancholy attendance: yet her health has suffered.—I have many letters to write; but I would not omit

communicating, what so tenderly concerns me, to my best friend.

I thank you for your books and your kind letters. Mr. Balguy and I think much more hardly of Jortin than you do. I could say much of this matter at another time.

I am &c.

Richard Hurd.

LETTER VI.

Dr. Warburton's answer to the preceding letter.

I ought rather to rejoice with all who loved that good man lately released, than to condole with them. Can there be a greater consolation to his friends than that he was snatched from human miseries to the reward of his labours? You I am sure must rejoice, amidst all the tenderness of filial piety, and the softenings of natural affection. The gentle melancholy, ~~that the~~ incessant memory of so indulgent a parent, and so excellent a man, will make habitual, will be always brightened with the sense of his present happiness; where, perhaps, one of his pleasures is his ministering-care over those who were dearest to him in life. I dare say this will be your case, because the same circumstances have made it mine. My great concern for you was while your father was languishing on his deathbed. And my concern at present is for your mother's grief and ill state of health.

As I know your excellent nature, I conjure you by our friendship to divert your mind by the conversation of your friends, and by reading, till you have fortified it sufficiently to bear the reflection on this common calamity of our nature, without any other emotion than that occasioned by a kind of soothing melancholy, which perhaps keeps it in a better frame than any other kind of disposition.

You see what man is, whenever so little within the

verge of matter and motion in a ferment. The affair of Lisbon has made men tremble, as well as the Continent shake, from one end of Europe to another ; from Gibraltar to the Highlands of Scotland. To suppose these desolations the scourge of Heaven for human impieties, is a dreadful reflection ; and yet to suppose ourselves in a forlorn and fatherless world, is ten times a more frightful consideration. In the first case, we may reasonably hope to avoid our destruction by the amendment of our manners ; in the latter, we are kept incessantly alarmed by the blind rage of warring elements.

The relation of the captain of a vessel, to the Admiralty, as Mr. Yorke told me the story, has something very striking in it. He lay off Lisbon on this fatal first of November, preparing to hoist sail for England. He looked towards the city, in the morning, which gave the promise of a fine day ; and he saw that proud metropolis rise above the waves, flourishing in wealth and plenty, and founded on a rock that promised a poet's eternity, at least, to its grandeur. He looked an hour after ; and saw the city involved in flames, and sinking in thunder. A sight more awful, mortal eyes could not behold on this side the day of doom.

I am &c.

William Warburton.

LETTER VII.

Dr. Hurd to Dr. Warburton.

Cambridge, Aug. 27, 1757.

I write one line, before I set out, to tell you how tenderly affected I am by your goodness to my poor mother. The honour of such a visit was best acknowledged by the language of the heart. And this, I am persuaded, would not be wanting, however she might be unable to

express her sense of it in any other manner. Nothing, I know, can exceed her gratitude for your constant favours to me. And if they make me happy on other accounts, think how they rejoice me when I see them contribute, as they do, to make her happy, who is so dear to me.

I must have more than the bias of filial piety in my mind, to be mistaken in thinking she is all you so kindly conceive of her. My father was just such another. He had the same simplicity of mind, and goodness of heart, with an understanding that dignified both. In a word, my dear sir, (for though I spoke of writing but one line, I could fill my paper on this subject,) it has pleased Heaven to bestow upon me two of its choicest blessings, the best of parents and the best of friends. While I live, I must retain the warmest sense of such mercies ; and, of course, be more than I can express, &c.

Richard Hurd.

LETTER VIII.

Dr. Warburton to Dr. Hurd.

My dear friend,

I am willing to tell you with my own pen, as soon as I am able, that my cure proceeds as the physical people could wish. Providence has been graciously pleased to relieve this bad accident * with the most favourable circumstances. Next to that, they tell me, I am indebted to a long habit of temperance ; not otherwise meritorious, for I think I stumbled upon temperance in the pursuit of pleasure.

Ever most affectionately yours,

William Gloucester.

* Of breaking his left arm, by a fall in the garden of Prior Park.

CHAPTER VIII.

EXTRACTS FROM THE LETTERS OF MR. GRAY.

LETTER I.

To his mother.

Cambridge, Nov. 7, 1749.

The news which I have just received from you, equally surprises and afflicts me. I have lost a person whom I loved very much*, and whom I have been used to from my infancy. But I am much more concerned for your loss, the circumstances of which I forbear to dwell upon, as you must be too sensible of them yourself: and you will, I fear, more and more need a consolation that no one can give, except He who has preserved her to you so many years, and at last, when it was his pleasure, has taken her from us to himself; and perhaps, if we reflect upon what she felt in this life, we may look upon this as an instance of his goodness both to her, and to those who loved her. She might have languished many years before our eyes, in a continual increase of pain, and totally helpless: she might have long wished for the end of her misery without being able to attain it: or, she might even have lost all sense, and yet continued to breathe; a sad spectacle to such as must have felt more for her than she could have done for herself. However you may deplore your own loss, yet think that she is at last easy and happy; and has now

* His aunt, Mrs. Mary Antrobus. She died on the fifth of November, and was buried in a vault in Stoke church-yard near the chancel door; in which also his mother and himself, according to the direction in his will, were afterwards buried.

more occasion to pity us than we her. I hope, and beg, you will support yourself with that resignation which we owe to HIM who gave us our being for our good, and who deprives us of it for the same reason.

I would have come to you directly, but you do not say whether you desire I should or not ; if you do, I beg I may know it, for there is nothing to hinder me, and I am in very good health.

LETTER II.

To Mr. Mason.

Durham, Dec. 26, 1753.

A little while before I received your melancholy letter, I had been informed by Mr. Charles Avison of one of the sad events you mention*. I know what it is to lose persons whom one's eyes and heart have long been used to ; and I never desire to part with the remembrance of that loss, nor would I wish that you should. It is some consolation that you had time to acquaint yourself with the idea beforehand ; and that your father suffered but little pain. After I have said this, I cannot help expressing my surprise at the disposition he has made of his affairs. I must (if you will suffer me to say so) call it great weakness : and yet perhaps your affliction for him is heightened by that very weakness ; for, I know, it is possible to feel an additional sorrow for the faults of those whom we have loved, even when those faults have been greatly injurious to ourselves.— Let me desire you not to expose yourself to any further danger in the midst of that scene of sickness and death ;

* The death of Mr. Mason's father, and of Dr. Marmaduke Pricket, a young physician of his own age, with whom he was brought up from infancy, who died of the same infectious fever.

but withdraw as soon as possible to some place at a little distance, in the country, for I do not, in the least, like your situation. I do not attempt to console you on the state your fortune is left in: if it were far worse, the good opinion I have of you tells me, you will not the sooner do any thing mean, or unworthy of yourself; and consequently I cannot pity you on this account, but I do sincerely on the new loss you have had of a good and friendly man, whose memory I honour. I have seen the scene you describe, and I know how dreadful it is: I know too I am the better for it. We are all idle and thoughtless beings: and we have no sense, no use in the world, any longer than that sad impression lasts; the deeper it is engraved the better.

LETTER III.

To Mr. Nicholls.

It is long since I heard you were gone in haste into Yorkshire, on account of your mother's illness. The same letter informed me that she was recovered: otherwise, I had then written to you, only to beg you would take care of her; and to tell you that I had discovered a thing very little known, which is, that, in one's whole life, one can never have any more than a single mother. You may think this is obvious; and, what you call, a trite observation. You are a green gosling! I was, at the same age, very near as wise as you; and yet I never discovered this truth, (with full evidence and conviction I mean,) till it was too late. It is thirteen years ago, and seems but as yesterday; and every day I live it sinks deeper into my heart*.

* Mr. Gray was very affectionately attached to his mother. After her death, he seldom mentioned her without a sigh.

Many a corollary could I draw from this axiom for your use not for my own; but I will leave you the merit of doing it for yourself.

Pray tell me how your health is: I conclude it is good, for I hear you offered yourself as a guide to Mr. Palgrave, into the Sierra Morena of Yorkshire. I passed the end of May and all June, in Kent, not disagreeably. In the west part of it, from every eminence, the eye catches some long reach of the Thames and Medway, with all their shipping: in the east, the sea breaks in upon you, and mixes its white transient sails and glittering blue expanse, with the deeper and brighter greens of the woods and corn. Now I am again very disconsolate, and all alone, for Mr. Brown is gone, and the cares of this world are coming thick upon me: you, I hope, are better off, riding and walking in the woods of Studley, &c. I must not wish for you here; besides, I am going to town at Michaelmas, by no means for amusement.

LETTER IV.

To Mr. Mason.

March 28, 1767.

I break in upon you at a moment, when we least of all are permitted to disturb our friends, only to say, that you are daily and hourly present to my thoughts. If the worst be not yet past, you will neglect and pardon me: but if the last struggle be over; if the poor object of your long anxieties, be no longer sensible of your kindness, or of her own sufferings, allow me, (at least in idea, for what could I do, were I present more than this?) to sit by you in silence, and to pity, from my heart, not her, who is at rest, but you, who lose her. May HE who made us, the Master of

will wish to serve you. Consider how many have had the same, or greater cause for dejection, with none of these resources before their eyes. Adieu ! I sincerely wish your happiness.

I have just heard that a friend of mine is struck with a paralytic disorder ; in which state it is likely he may live for years, incapable of assisting himself, and in the hands of servants, or relations, who only gape after his spoils : think how many things may befall a man far worse than poverty or death.

CHAPTER IX.

LETTERS OF MISS TALBOT.

LETTER I.

To Mrs. Carter.

1745.

Because you are in low^t spirits, dear miss Carter, and I am not in very high ones, I think I can scarcely do better, than to write to you. I have felt a great deal of what you express. On the destruction of my cloud-built castles, and their airy inhabitants, I have fancied myself, as you do, left in a dreary solitude ; and I have said,

“ My torch is out, and the world lies before me,
Like a black desert at the approach of night.”

But with the help of some experience, much reflection, and a few plain books, I am grown into a happier state of mind, and, I think, much better suited to this world.

As well might we expect

“ Perpetual sunshine and unclouded skies,
As man for ever temperate, just, and wise.”

I do not pity you for having experienced this truth. I believe, they who take the world as they find it, and see it as it is, live more happily, than they who make a fine, fairy world of their own, peopled with sylphs. There is such a mixture of folly and infirmity in the best and wisest of the human race, that we should be much more thankful for the good we meet with, than disappointed at the bad. But, instead of submitting patiently to the infirmities and faults of human nature, we are apt to lay all the blame upon particular people.

Do not think, however, that I am at all inclined to the wretched set of writers who try to represent human nature as utterly base and contemptible : on the contrary, I have the highest notions of those noble improvements of which it is very capable ; only I see strongly its great fallibility, and that perfection of any kind is not to be looked for here. In youth, we are apt to form too beautiful ideas. Every thing in this world, even the highest merit we can meet with in it, deserves to be treated with some degree of indifference. There is a moderation to be observed, even in our justest sentiments, our tenderest attachments, and our most laudable pursuits. But our minds, evidently made for a state of mediocrity, are strangely apt to run into extremes. Many people have no notion of any intermediate step between all excellence in a character, and an absolute annihilation of it, upon the first fault. This occasions what, I think, gives a most painful feeling,—that strange, contradictory way in which characters of remarkable people are bandied about in the world. Some commend Addison for his learning, his elegant composition, his moral character ; another refers you to Mr. Pope's Atticus for his vanity, his pride, and self-love ! Very well : Mr. Addison had human frailties ; but why are they not compatible with great and real virtues ; why may we not admire him, and other characters of much greater mixture, as amiable and excellent, without any indignation at them for not being angels ?

I have left no room for the subject one's heart and head are full of at present ; but talking it over and over, scarcely serves any other purpose than to make one quite giddy. We are in the hands of Providence ; and though we are bad enough ourselves, our cause is good and noble. If you have any news on your coast, pray

send it to me. God forbid you should have any from France!

Yours, &c.

Catherine Talbot.

LETTER II.

To Mrs Carter.

Cuddesden, June 8, 1748.

I own myself to blame, dear miss Carter, for not having written to you sooner. Your kind concern for us deserved to be earlier satisfied; and I am ashamed you should have had any occasion to inquire for us at the house.

What we have suffered on our return hither, both in the journey and ever since, would give you too much pain to be told. Though I began to dread it before we left town, the reality has surpassed my apprehensions; and I am at present pretty well convinced that the stupid insensibility of which I accused myself, was only a chimera. My imagination, seldom lively enough in its paintings to represent distinctly to me even the face of persons whom I have conversed with the day before, is now perpetually setting before my eyes all the much loved imagery of former happy years. I see the dear friend* I have lost, in every variety of situation and employment that I was used to behold her in here. Every spot, and every object, renews her idea. As this was the place she used most to enjoy herself in, and where she partook all the happiness which she heightened, I cannot help foolishly, and indeed unkindly, wishing her back again, to share those paltry pleasures with me.

* Mrs. Secker, the wife of Dr. Secker, bishop of Oxford, and afterwards archbishop of Canterbury.

When after a full indulgence, which is the best relief, my thoughts are naturally led to some other attention, they are called off by a more painful one, which I cannot help having, to my lord and to my mother. As they command themselves so well, and smooth over the outward appearance into all that calmness, and propriety of behaviour, which reason and religion dictate, I am forced almost to pry into their hearts for the inward anxiety that I would fain relieve ; I watch every look, and every unbidden sigh, and I am in double uneasiness at every new melancholy object which I think will wound them.

This is my situation ; but do not be uneasy for any of us. We shall all do well. As for myself in particular, I have, whether you will believe me or not, a natural cheerfulness of temper, as well as of principle, and an aptitude to be pleased, and to see every object in a beautiful light, that will, with time, give me very good spirits. I am better to-day than I have been at all. We have begun our rides ; and we have had one that was really pleasant. The bishop of Gloucester's leaving us on Friday, is no good circumstance ; but we have company in the house, and we never want employment.

So far of my letter I wrote last night, by the remnant of owl light ; and I find it is scarcely legible. Do not imitate me ; I am much better at giving precepts, than in setting examples. One thing, however, I would have you do like me : as my letter has been all about myself, pray let yours be all about yourself. I want much to hear of all that concerns you : the health of your sister ; your place of abode, whether Enfield or London ; your employments, amusements, embarrassments, vexations ; and, in short, your thoughts upon all manner of subjects. Having made so reasonable a demand, I have nothing more to do, but to present you the kind compli-

ments of the two bishops and of my mother ; and to thank you, as I do most sincerely, for the many delightful hours, you were so kind as to spend with me in London, and for thinking it worth while to take so many long walks for my sake. Believe me, I am not ungrateful ; but I am ever, &c.

Catherine Talbot.

LETTER III.

To Mrs. Carter.

Cuddesden, July 4, 1748.

Here I am, dear miss Carter, determined to answer your two delightful letters, which I had purposed doing long ago, but I always put off till to-morrow : and who knows what to-morrow is, or what it shall produce? For since that intention and this act, I have had a week's parenthesis of absolute indolence, insipidity, and uselessness ; having been laid up with the childish disorder of the chicken-pox. I am now, I thank God, getting pretty well again, though it is but to-day that I have been allowed to dine below.

Dear miss Carter, why do you wish me more attached than I am to the world, where the slightest disorder reduces one, in so short a time, to so low and wretched a state of being? I feel great and lively gratitude that I have any place at all in it ; that I am continued in it among such friends ; and that I may hope to make them some little amends for all the trouble I have given them. I am thankful for life ; I love it ; I enjoy it with cheerfulness ; and I try to improve it to the utmost. I do not pretend to be above the world ; but various circumstances have contributed to set me at a distance from it. Convinced by blessed experience, and directed by that Guiding Eye, which certainly saw that nearer I should have been too liable to be entangled, and too weak to

disengage myself; I only wish to keep my distance. But surely there is no innocent delight, or relief to human weakness, that I will not most thankfully stoop from the proudest contemplation to pick up, and put in my bosom like a damask rose. But trifles I would look upon as trifles, and not subject myself to be really hurt by them; nor would I suffer my imagination to swell any pleasure beyond the natural size, for fear it should also in proportion increase the attendant pain beyond what I have strength to bear.

I am very much obliged to you for entering into all the particulars I desired to hear, both about yourself and your friends. I rejoice greatly at the good account you give me of your sister.—I absolve you entirely for your question, which was so far from offending against truth, that I think it was a shield very cleverly thrown before her to prevent every attack. I am persuaded, if people did but employ half the skill and genius in avoiding falsehoods, or making necessary truths appear graceful, that they employ in a very different, wretched way, conversation would be much benefited.

Adieu, for the present! I have so lately recovered the use of my eyes, that I must not be too free with them; but I must, before I leave off, tell you how greatly my mother admires your last letter, and hopes we are both of us much the better for it. Though we have had, you know, another very considerable shock since we came hither, in the heavy and sudden distress of the Portland family, and though our own remembrances here are too dear and too pleasing not to attend us continually, yet we are cheerful, and thankful; and we really enjoy ourselves and one another, our books, our employments, our flowers, and our rural scenes.

Catherine Talbot.

LETTER IV.

To Mrs. Carter.

Cuddesden, July 26, 1748.

Are you still, dear miss Carter, in the most forlorn and joyless of all deserts,—a London solitude? or do you breathe again a freer air among the groves of Enfield? Be your situation what it will, are your nerves and spirits better? When our spirits are good, the desert blooms, and every place is happy. Indeed, I sincerely pitied you for a turn of thought, which you very strongly express, and I have often very strongly and painfully felt,—a restless and insatiable desire of improvement, and such a sense of the nothingness of all one thinks, and does, and can do, as damps every pursuit. But, upon after consideration of this subject, I have at last satisfied myself with the persuasion, that our business, in this state of being, is only to aim at improvement and information; and that, as the attainment of it in any satisfactory degree is reserved to a better, we ought to sit down here contented, if we find ourselves in a teachable and diligent frame of mind, and have reason to believe that we do our best, let that best be ever so poor. Life would not be filled up with so many necessary trifles, if employments of dignity and real worth were the things belonging to us; but as pride and vanity are perhaps our strongest and most dangerous natural bent, it was highly fit we should be perpetually reminded what poor creatures we are. A right disposition of mind is the highest improvement we are capable of making here; and to the attainment of this, all our infirmities, all the interruptions of our favourite studies, all that we usually reckon hinderances, distresses, or disadvantages, abundantly contribute. I hope this is not a

dull, indolent scheme ; for I do not in the least mean that we should lay aside the noblest pursuits of knowledge, which does not lie too far out of the way, but only, that whenever we find it (by what means soever) actually out of our reach, our minds should feel no distress. Adieu ! I will go and take an evening walk in the long gallery ; and if my thoughts should prove bad companions, a book shall amuse them into good humour.

My book has been Pascal's Thoughts ; and I fancy, if you had walked with me, we should have agreed very tolerably in our sentiments. This work, wherever I have dipped into it accidentally, has given me the highest pleasure. What the author says of the grandeur and misery of human nature, taken both together, seems to me to give the justest notions of life ; nor is it at all painful to consider the dark side of this prospect, when one knows that, unless things are by wilful folly put out of their due course, the sunshine is to be continually gaining ground, and the shades vanishing before it, till at last the poor, wretched, creeping animal throws off its imperfections, and shines forth in great dignity and lustre. But even then, though every such highly improved being will deserve great degrees of love and esteem, no one surely will, or can, deserve so strong and partial an attachment, as is, by some affectionate hearts and lively imaginations, thought due to the poor insect here. Care, tenderness, sympathy in joys and sorrows, every sentiment and every expression of kindness and good will, are due to our fellow-creatures ; and more especially to those with whom friendship or relation has happily united us. But to centre all our joys and hopes, all our fears and anxieties, in any human object, so as to make the happiness of our lives depend solely or chiefly

upon that ; to raise our affections to their utmost pitch, to add to them all the heightenings of imagination, and to fix all this in a fairy world of our own ;—is surely to put oneself in a state of mind very unsuitable to the orders of Providence, and to the nature of this world, and its short-lived inhabitants.

Pascal drew very wrong consequences from these right principles ; and for fear of being too much beloved, seems to me to have grown into a harshness and austerity of behaviour to his friends, that must have given them great uneasiness. Let but human creatures be beloved like human creatures, and there is no danger of our going too far : and surely it is one of the highest duties for people to render themselves as amiable as they can.

I am &c.

Catherine Talbot.

LETTER V.

To Mrs. Carter.

Cuddesden, Nov. 29, 1755.

I can write but a very short letter, dear miss Carter, as we are in the midst of bustle and confusion. On Monday we set off for that scene of hurry and perplexities, St. Paul's. But I must return your papers* to you, and send you my lord's remarks. I agree with him in all of them that come within my unlearned comprehension. But above all, I most earnestly beseech you to consider of what infinite importance it is, that your allusions and quotations from "the Words of eternal life," should be chosen, and made, in such a manner, as evidently to manifest that superiority of Divine to

* Mrs. Carter's Translation of Epictetus.

human, which so many, alas! are endeavouring, as fast as they can, to forget. By no means compare the proud, surly cynic, with Him, "who spoke as never man spoke." O my dear friend, the more attentively you study those sacred books, the true and only source of light, and joy, and comfort, the more you will glory in their excellence; the more you will rejoice, in even this opportunity, of bearing a faithful testimony to it, in an age like ours. How long we shall have this, or any opportunity, God knows. The present year is a very alarming one. But, God be thanked! there is a sure place of refuge; and there is only *one*.

Great caution I am sensible is to be used, and every expression avoided that can give needless offence, as well as every one that cannot be justified by the strictest truth. But whither truth leads the way, dare undauntedly to follow.

I am &c.

Catherine Talbot.

LETTER VI.

To Mrs. Carter.

St. Paul's, Feb. 24, 1756.

I was conscious when my last letter went away, that there was a vehemence of expression in it, (which I had not time to soften,) very improperly addressed to one, who, I am sure, cannot but see the infinitely important subject in the same light that I do. My vehemence, therefore, was fighting not with you, but with I know not what complex idea of cold critics, and half-headed readers, that some of the notes*, and

* Mrs. Carter's notes, annexed to her translation of Epictetus.

my apprehensions of the misuse that would certainly be made of them, had conjured up in my mind.

Have I been very busy, you ask? Why really if I have, it has not been to much purpose; for I can recollect but little that I have done. Have I then been very idle? I heartily hope not, for that is against all my principles and resolutions. Not one of the places appropriated to dissipation have I appeared in this year. I have lived on quietly from day to day: less at home than I should choose, if mere choice were the rule to be followed; and yet less with the friends, in going to whom I have spent so much time, the distance from one end of this huge town to the other being immense. If my time runs out thus imperceptibly without any visible expense, there must be some secret cheat I put upon myself, which ought to be well looked into; and I thank you for calling upon me to make the examination.

I do not tell you, however, that I have not written many letters, read many books, spent much time in company of excellent people whom I love, and a great deal in such exercise as was indispensably requisite for my health: but it is almost necessary in this place to live "*au jour la journée*," and giving up all schemes and choices of one's own, to despatch such employments as the present moment more immediately calls for. And, I think, Epictetus says excellent things on this head; and affirms that one ought not to be always sighing after leisure, but to know how to live sometimes without it. But I do sigh very often to feel a dead weight of unimproved time upon my hands, in the visits of this town, when a whole afternoon's conversation is wasted on the most uninteresting trifles. Would time really stand still so long, this wretched trifling might be less unpardonable. But time flows on in the same rapid course; and

while we still trifle, eternity is upon us. A gracious Providence calls upon us, by the loudest alarms*, to hasten and finish our appointed work; and we carelessly divert our attention to objects undeserving the serious contemplations of a monkey. I do not call it trifling, to be gay with our friends; to enliven the circle of social good humour; to improve all our talents, small as well as great, to the praise of the Giver; thankfully to enjoy and admire even his least and most common bounties; to refresh ourselves with needful relaxation; and to indulge, at fit times, the innocent sportings of fancy. But I have no patience with the false politeness of the world which banishes every subject that is interesting and delightful, if it bears but the name of seriousness, to introduce every one that is dull and tiresome, merely because it is unimportant. Some striking subjects have indeed forced themselves upon every body's attention this winter: but alas! in a soil where weeds and thorns are so plentifully sown, no lasting good can be expected without a daily preparation of the ground, begun in humility, and continued with patience.

I take the unconscionable liberty of writing to you who do not need it, what I dare not speak in polite companies that do. I confess I am in a peculiarly serious disposition this winter, though by no means a gloomy one. I have great awe upon my mind, and yet no sort of panic. I feel an earnest desire to be the better myself, and as earnest a one that every body else may be the better, for the warnings we have had. The storms that seem ready to break over us, may yet, after a salutary threatening, be dispelled by HIM who made all

* The memorable earthquake at Lisbon, happened on the first of November, 1755.

things, and into whose hands all things are committed.— Had the one minute in which you perceived so gentle a motion, been lengthened into three or four, in what scenes of distress had we both been involved ! how likely that we should never more have met in this world ! Such thoughts do not strike me with melancholy : they only serve to endear every friend, and heighten the value of every added moment, at the same time that they loosen my mind from these vanishing scenes. I often look upon the loftiest and strongest buildings, as shadowy forms in a cloud, which may the next minute disappear : the scenes of gaiety seem like gleams of April sunshine, which may instantaneously be overcast.

Were idle fears to be indulged, I should not at all like your situation, so near the swelling sea, so near the threatened coast : but in what situation are we secure from dangers ? in what situation are we removed from under the immediate eye of a gracious Providence ?

You do not mention having heard any remarkable noise previously to the balancing motion. I suppose, therefore, there either was none, or you did not attend to it. With us, the whole day was immoderately snowy. It gives me pleasure to think, in what excellent employment the shock, had it been greater, would have found you. Most heartily do I wish all possible success to the great pains you have taken with your brother. How important is your task, to form the mind that is hereafter to instruct so many ! My best wishes attend all you love ; and my gratitude to yourself for permitting to be of that number,

Your &c.

Catherine Talbot.

LETTER VII.

To Mrs. Carter.

Lambeth, Oct. 19, 1761.

• I know so much of Mrs. Chapone both from you and Mr. Richardson, that I have sincerely felt her affliction.—I was meditating yesterday upon death, till I was amazed that it is almost the only subject which is never treated of in conversation farther than as a mere uninteresting fact. Were any number of persons intending to embark for a distant, unknown country, of whom some might be called to-morrow, and all must be called soon, would they not, whenever they met as friends and fellow travellers, be inquiring amongst themselves, how each was provided for the journey; what accounts each had heard of the place; the terms of reception; what interest and hopes each had secured, what treasures remitted, what protection ensured; and would they not excite each other to despatch what was yet possible to be done, and might to-morrow be irretrievably too late?—I think it would sit pleasingly on the mind, when a friend was vanished out of this visible world to have such conversations to reflect upon! What astonishing scenes are now opened to the minds of many with whom, a few months ago, we used familiarly and triflingly to converse! with whom we have wasted many an inestimable hour! What clear views have they now of those great and important truths, for which the foolish bustle of this world, leaves scarcely any place in the immortal mind!

I am interrupted.—Adieu! &c.

Catherine Talbot.

CHAPTER X.

LETTERS OF MRS. CARTER.

LETTER I.

To Mrs. Vesey.

Deal, Oct. 30, 1763.

By your expectation of hearing from me, I apprehend that you did not receive a letter which I wrote to you from the Hague. If you did not, I am doubly obliged to you, for giving me the pleasure of a letter from you. Yet the joy which I always feel on every proof of your remembrance, was deadened by the melancholy account which you give me of your friends, and the reflection on the pain which a heart like yours must feel on such an occasion. I well remember the young lady who was with you last winter; and I grieve for your loss of her. Yet that strong sensibility which you mention, though the indication of an amiable disposition, is such a capacity of exquisite suffering, that her early removal from a world like this, may, to herself and to those who best loved her, be a distinguished mercy.

The storms which have produced so sad effects in other places, have been but very little felt on our coast. I believe you guess right, that a taste for the sublime would be very apt to lead me to the full view of a tempest, though I could not stand the shock of seeing any one suffer by it, but I should quit my station, as you would do, in the like case. The person who could survey the horrors of a storm with scarcely any other senti-

ment than a cool reflection on its general advantages, would be very little the better for such a contemplation. Universal and remote consequences would operate very faintly on our reason, if the heart were not, by Infinite Wisdom, formed to feel the private and immediate stroke. By this, it is awed and softened to such a sense of human weakness and dependence, as leads it into a state the most friendly to virtue. Reason, on which we are so apt to build our foolish pride, would perpetually slumber over the task of life, if it were not awakened to the charge by the voice of the affections. Upon this principle, I cannot help thinking that a cloister is by no means such a school of devotion as it is represented; and every observation which I made abroad served to confirm my opinion. I am persuaded that the vicissitudes of the world much more naturally carry the thoughts to a sense of our dependence upon the Divine protection, than that dead vacation from all present hopes and fears that stupifies the retirement of a convent.

I know not to what article in the papers you allude about Voltaire; but I suppose by what you say, he is expected in England. I am sorry for it. Certainly, from every society in which I had a casting vote, he would be excluded; and excluded particularly for the very circumstance for which he would claim to be admitted,—his being a *genius*. I must confess, that to me the idolatry of great talents applied to wicked purposes, appears worse than the idolatry of titles and riches.—Do not think me too severe, my dear Mrs. Vesey. For particular faults I believe few people have more indulgence than I have; I feel how much I need it for myself: but atrocious principles ought to be treated with the utmost detestation. A wicked writer is a much worse character than even a wicked man. The tempo-

rary example of the last may ruin a few individuals : but the other poisons a river, and diffuses infection through whole kingdoms ; the current of time rolls it to successive generations, and there can be no guessing when the force of the venom will be spent. The present fashionable system of French philosophy, subverts all the foundations of morality ; breaks all connexion between earth and Heaven ; and tries to cheat mankind out of all that is worth living for, and all that is worth dying for. Can any talents of understanding, any treasures of learning, or any brilliancy of wit, reconcile one to the conversation of a person engaged in a scheme to thwart every dispensation of Heaven for human happiness ? I am sure you find much more satisfaction in talking with your rustic dialist, than you could from the polished expositor of Newton,

“Che di sublime, chiaro ingegno adorno,
Tutt’ altro seppe che se stesso e Dio.”

The state of my health was so very languid, while I was abroad, that every exertion was more than I well knew how to support. My head is as bad as ever since my return. I am now going to lay it on a pillow for the remainder of the day ; but I would not omit writing, as you desired to hear from me.

Adieu, &c.

Elizabeth Carter.

LETTER II.

To Mrs. Vesey.

Lambeth Palace, Sept. 2, 1768.

Your kind inquiries, my dear Mrs. Vesey, did not reach me so soon as you intended : your letter went to Deal, and I did not receive it till yesterday.

I am much obliged to you for the concern which you express for my friends and me, on the late melancholy event at Lambeth*. You rightly judged how much I must be struck by the death of this great and good man, with whose friendship I had been honoured for more than twenty years, and to whom I had innumerable obligations. But I scarcely felt my own loss, compared with what I suffered from the effect which I knew it must have on Mrs. and miss Talbot, who had spent almost their whole lives with him. Though I knew miss Talbot's absolute submission, in every event, to the Divine will, there was great reason to apprehend that her weak health might sink under the first shock of so sudden an attack: but, I thank God, she has been wonderfully supported; and I had the comfort of finding both her and her mother in a better state than could have been expected.

The archbishop had for many months suffered constant pain, which both himself and his physicians took for the rheumatism; and there was no apprehension of any danger. You have seen by the papers what was the immediate cause of his death; he survived the fracture † only three days. This accident, which, at first view, seemed so grievous a circumstance, soon appeared to have been a merciful means of freeing him from sufferings which must have been every day increasing to a terrible degree.

The whole amount of the archbishop's fortune, when compared with the great preferments which he had enjoyed from his first setting out in life, is a mere trifle:

* The death of archbishop Secker.

† Of his thigh-bone, which was become completely carious; and which separated, of itself, without any external violence.

and, in this instance, as well as in many others, he has left a noble example to his successors. The extent of his charities is scarcely to be imagined. It is grievous to hear every day of the desolation of such numbers as owed the best part of their subsistence to his bounty. Nor was he only charitable; he was kind and generous to a degree, which can be known only by those who were acquainted with his private and domestic life. I have seen a catalogue of his manuscripts, which are to be deposited in the library at Lambeth; and well as I was acquainted with his unwearied application, I was surprised to find such monuments of solitary studiousness in one who had been so much engaged in the active duties of his station, which he executed with great exactness and diligence.

I know not how much longer Mrs. and miss Talbot will continue here: certainly, however, not more than a month; and I hope not so long, as every object within these melancholy walls must, at every hour, remind them of their loss. The hope of being of some little relief to them, keeps up my spirits amidst the uncomfortable scenes by which I am surrounded. The disorder and confusion of half unfurnished rooms, which at every step present painful ideas of the dissolution of a family, lately so happily established, you will easily imagine must be extremely affecting.

Miss Talbot has some general remembrance of having seen you at Bath. If you admired her in her infancy, you would have been happy, if you had continued your acquaintance, to find that her whole life has answered every early promise both of her understanding and her character. Her behaviour under the present trial is conformable to every other part of her conduct, and worthy of the principles by which she has been uni-

formly guided. With the weakest health, and the quickest sensibility of her loss, she discovers the noblest fortitude and the most unrepining resignation; of which she gives the best, and, during the struggles of recent grief, the most difficult proof, by constantly endeavouring to set every remaining blessing in the most comfortable and cheerful point of view.

When my friends leave this place, they propose going to Mr. Talbot's, in Surry, till a house, which they have taken in Lower Grosvenor street, can be got ready to receive them. As soon as they leave Lambeth, I return into Kent. I have written to you only on one subject: indeed, my present situation will scarcely allow me to fix on any other; and I thought you would be glad to know particularly how we go on.

Adieu! Remember you give me hopes of hearing from you soon.

Elizabeth Carter.

LETTER III.

To Mrs. Vesey.

Clarges Street, Jan. 15, 1770.

You will be so kindly solicitous about me, my dear Mrs. Vesey, when you see in the papers a confirmation of the reality of my apprehensions about my dear miss Talbot, that I cannot forbear writing you some account of myself. I am tolerably well; and my spirits, though ~~low~~, are very composed. With the deepest feeling of my own ~~its~~ unspeakable loss of one of the dearest and most invaluable ~~the~~ blessings of my life, I am to the highest degree thankful to the ~~the~~ Divine goodness for removing her from the ~~the~~ evil wound and aggravated sufferings, which, in a longer struggle, ~~be replac~~ must have been unavoidable. ~~get those~~ I get those he calm and peaceable

sorrow of tenderness and affection, sweetly alleviated by the joyful assurance of her happiness, is a delightful sentiment compared with what I have suffered for these last two or three months.

A few days before her death, she was seized with a sudden hoarseness and cough, which seemed the effect of a cold, and from which bleeding relieved her; but there remained an oppression from phlegm which was extremely troublesome to her. On the ninth, this symptom increased; and she appeared heavy and sleepy, which was attributed to an opiate she had taken the night before. I staid with her till she went to bed, with an intention of going afterwards into her room; but I was told she was asleep. I went away about nine. In less than an hour, she waked; and after the struggle of scarcely a minute, it pleased God to remove her pious soul from its mortal sufferings to that Heaven for which her life had been an uninterrupted preparation. Never surely was there a lovelier pattern of evangelical goodness, decorated by all the ornaments of a highly improved understanding, and recommended by a sweetness of temper, an elegance and a politeness of manners, of a peculiar and more engaging kind than in any other character I ever knew.

I am just returned from seeing all that was mortal of my angelic friend deposited in the earth. I do not mean that I went in ceremony, which would have been too strong a trial for my spirits; but privately with two other of her intimate friends. I felt it would be a comfort to me, on that most solemn occasion, to thank Almighty God for delivering her from her sufferings, and to implore his assistance, in preparing myself to follow her. Little, alas! infinitely too little, have I yet profited by the blessing of such an example. God grant

that her memory, which I hope will ever survive in my heart, may produce a happier effect!

Adieu, my dear friend! God bless you! and conduct us both to that happy assembly, where the spirits of the just shall dread no future separation! And may we both remember this awful truth, that we can hope to die the death of the righteous only by resembling their lives.

Elizabeth Carter.

LETTER IV.

To Mrs. Vesey.

Deal, June 3, 1778.

Our two letters I believe, my dear Mrs. Vesey, met each other on the road: and it is pleasant to think that perhaps at the same instant they conveyed to us our affectionate remembrance of each other. I have been about ten days settled in my little quiet abode; and very thankful I am for such a habitation. I had the happiness you kindly wished me of finding my friends, I thank God, very well. Amidst all the gratitude which I owe, and which I can never sufficiently pay, to Heaven, for the greater number of those who still survive, I feel much dejection at missing those who once used to welcome my return, and now welcome it no more! But they, I trust, are at peace. And this thought would give me unabated comfort, if the same arguments that convince the understanding, and awe the mind to resignation, could subdue the fond affections of the heart, which retains its weak regrets,

“Sol perche troppo sente, e poco crede.”

Yet perhaps the evil would be worse, if the objects of our tenderness could be replaced, and new engagements make us entirely forget those that are suspended by the

stroke of death. The world would then hold us in everlasting chains, and we should lose one powerful motive for looking forward to the prospect of a better. Every infliction of Providence in this world, is graciously designed to animate our endeavours for that where sorrow shall be no more. In the mean time, let me comfort myself in the thought that the survivors are the only mourners; and that the spirits of the friends who are at present removed from their society, are possessed of a degree of happiness, infinitely superior to all that the fondest affection of the families to whom they were so dear, could procure for them in a world like this.

My mind, at present too much disposed to sinking, particularly felt, what at any time would have given me pain, your seeming to raise a doubt of your coming to England. But I will hope it was only a transient cloud passing over your own mind. Public affairs do indeed carry a threatening appearance: but you and I remember when the danger was as great, or perhaps greater; when a rebel army was in the midst of the kingdom, and an invasion alarmed the extremities. That storm, God be thanked, blew happily over; and the same gracious Providence may avert the present impending calamities. Our national provocations against Heaven are very great; but there are, I trust, in the walks of private life, so many who proceed uniformly in a course of duty, that the proportion, one may hope, is much greater than that which would once have averted the stroke of Divine vengeance from a devoted city.

Write to me soon; and cheer my heart and spirits by the hopes of our meeting next year.

I am &c.

Elizabeth Carter.

CHAPTER XL.

LETTERS TO AND FROM DR. HORNE, AFTERWARDS
BISHOP OF NORWICH.

LETTER I.

Dr. Horne to Dr. Adam Smith.—On the life, death,
and philosophy, of David Hume, esq.*

Sir,

You have been lately employed in embalming a philosopher ; his *body*, I believe I must say : for concerning the other part of him, neither you nor he seems to have entertained an idea, sleeping or waking. Else, it surely might have claimed a little of your care and attention ; and one would think, the belief of the soul's existence and immortality could do no harm, if it did no good, in a "Theory of Moral Sentiments." But every gentleman understands his own business best.

Will you do an unknown correspondent the honour, sir, to accept a few plain remarks, in a free, easy way, upon the curious letter to Mr. Strahan, in which this memorable operation of *embalming* is performed ? Our philosopher's account of his own life, shall likewise be considered as we go along.

Trust me, good doctor, I am no bigot, enthusiast, nor enemy to human learning. I have made many a hearty meal, in private, upon Cicero and Virgil, as well as Mr. Hume. Few persons, though perhaps, as Mr. Hume says, upon a like occasion, "I ought not to judge

* Author of "Theory of Moral Sentiments," "Inquiry into the nature and causes of the Wealth of Nations," &c.

on that subject," have a quicker relish for the productions of genius, and the beauties of composition. It is, therefore, as little in my intention, as it is in my power, to prejudice the literary character of your friend. From his History of England I have received great pleasure; and I have ever esteemed it to be a noble effort of "matter and motion." But when a man takes it into his head to do mischief, you must be sensible, sir, that the public has always reason to lament his being a "clever fellow."

I hope it will not be deemed vanity in me likewise to say, that I have in my composition a large proportion of "the milk of human kindness." I have never known what envy or hatred is; and I am ready, at all times, to praise, wherever I can do it in honour and conscience. David, I doubt not, was, as you affirm, a social, agreeable person, of a convivial turn, told a good story, and played well at "his favourite game of whist." I know not that John the Painter did the same. But there is no absurdity in the supposition. If he did not, he might have done it. Doctor, be not offended; I mean no harm. I would only infer thus much, that I could not, on that account, bring myself absolutely to approve his odd fancy of firing all the dock yards in the kingdom.

Concerning the "philosophical opinions" of Mr. Hume, you observe, that "men will, no doubt, judge variously." They are certainly at liberty so to do, because the author himself did the same. Sometimes, to be sure, he esteemed them ingenious, deep, subtle, elegant, and calculated to diffuse his literary fame to the ends of the world. But, at other times, he judged very differently. "I dine," says he, "I play a game at backgammon, I converse, and am merry with my friends; and when, after three or four hours' amusement, I would return to these speculations, they appear so cold,

so strained, and so ridiculous, that I cannot find in my heart to enter into them any farther." Now, sir, if you will only give me leave to judge, before dinner, of Mr. Hume's philosophy, as he judged of it after dinner, we shall have no farther dispute upon that subject. I could indeed wish, to have a scheme of thought, which would bear contemplating, at any time of the day; because, otherwise, a person must be at the expense of maintaining a brace of these metaphysical hobby-horses, one to mount in the morning, and the other in the afternoon.

After all, sir, friend as I am to freedom of opinion, (and no one living can be more so,) I am rather sorry that men should judge so variously of Mr. Hume's philosophical speculations. For since the design of them is to banish out of the world every idea of truth and comfort, salvation and immortality, a future state, and the providence and even the existence of God, it seems a pity, that we cannot all be of a mind about them. And I could have been well pleased to have been informed by you, sir, that, before his death, he had ceased to number among his happy effusions, tracts of this kind and tendency.

Let me come a little closer to you, doctor, if you please, upon this subject. Do not be under any apprehensions: my name does not begin with a B. Are you sure, and can you make us sure, that there really exist no such things as a God, and a future state of rewards and punishments? If so, all is well. Let us then, in our last hours, read Lucian, and play at whist, and droll upon Charon and his boat; let us die as foolish and insensible, as much like our brother philosophers, the calves of the field, and the asses of the desert, as we can. But, if such things are, as they certainly are, is it right in you, sir, to hold up to our view as "per-

fectly wise and virtuous," the character and conduct of one who seems to have been possessed with an incurable antipathy to all that is called religion; and who strained every nerve, to explode, suppress, and extirpate the spirit of it among men, and that its very name might no more be had in remembrance? Are we, do you imagine, to be reconciled to a character of this sort, and fall in love with it, because its owner was good company, and knew how to manage his cards? Low as the age is fallen, I will venture to hope, it has grace enough yet left to resent such usage as this.

You endeavour to entertain us with some pleasant conceits that were supposed by Mr. Hume to pass between himself and Charon. The philosopher tells the old gentleman, that, "he had been endeavouring to open the eyes of the public; that he was correcting his works for a new edition," from which great things were to be expected; in short, "if he could but live a few years longer, (and that was the only reason why he would wish to do so,) he might have the satisfaction of seeing the downfall of some of the prevailing systems of superstition."

We all know, sir, what the word superstition denotes, in Mr. Hume's vocabulary, and against what Religion his shafts are levelled, under that name. But, doctor Smith, do you believe, or would you have us believe, that it is Charon, who calls us out of the world, at the appointed time? Does not HE call us out of it, who sent us into it? Let me, then, present you with a paraphrase of the wish, as addressed to HIM, to whom it should, and to whom alone, with any sense and propriety, it can be addressed. Thus it runs: "Lord! I have only one reason why I should wish to live. Suffer me so to do; I most humbly beseech thee, yet a little while, till mine eyes shall behold the success of my undertaking to over-

throw, by my metaphysics, the faith which thy Son descended from Heaven to plant, and to root out the knowledge and the love of thee from the earth."

Here are no rhetorical figures, no hyperboles, nor exaggerations. The matter is even so. I appeal, in the face of the world, sir, to yourself, and to every man, who can read and understand the writings of Mr. Hume, whether this is not, in plain, honest English, the drift of his philosophy as it is called; for the propagation of which alone he wished to live; and concerning which you are pleased to say coolly, "men will judge variously, every one approving or condemning these opinions, according as they happen to coincide or disagree with his own." Our thoughts are very naturally carried back, upon this occasion, to the author of the first philosophy, who likewise engaged to open the eyes of the public. He did so; but the only discovery which they found themselves able to make, was,—that they were naked.

You talk much, sir, of our philosopher's gentleness of manners, good nature, compassion, generosity, charity. Alas, sir, whither were they all fled, when he so often sat down, calmly and deliberately, to obliterate from the hearts of the human species every trace of the knowledge of God and his dispensations; all faith in his kind providence and fatherly protection; all hope of enjoying his grace and favour, here, or hereafter; all love of him, and of their brethren for his sake; all the patience under tribulation, all the comfort in time of sorrow, derived from these abundant and perennial sources? Did a good man think himself able, by the force of metaphysic incantation, in a moment, to blot the sun out of heaven, and dry up every fountain upon earth, would he attempt to do it?—Tully had but a faint glimpse of the country to which we are all travelling: yet, so pleasing was even

an imperfect and a shadowy prospect into futurity, that he declared, no man should ravish it from him. And surely, Tully was a philosopher, as well as Hume. O had he seen the light which shone upon Hume, he would not have closed his eyes against it ; had the same cup been offered to him, he would not have dashed it untasted from him !

“ Perhaps our modern sceptics are ignorant, that without the belief of a God, and the hope of immortality, the miseries of human life would often be insupportable. But can I suppose them in a state of total and invincible stupidity, utter strangers to the human heart, and to human affairs ? Surely, they would not thank me for such a supposition. Yet this I must suppose, or I must believe them to be the most cruel, the most perfidious, and the most profligate of men. Caressed by those who call themselves the great, engrossed by the formalities of life, intoxicated with vanity, pampered with adulation, dissipated in the tumult of business, or amidst the vicissitudes of folly, they perhaps have little need and little relish for the consolations of religion. But let them know, that in the solitary scenes of life, there is many an honest and tender heart pining with incurable anguish, pierced with the sharpest sting of disappointment, bereft of friends, chilled with poverty, racked with disease, scourged by the oppressor ; whom nothing but trust in Providence, and the hope of a future retribution, can preserve from the agonies of despair. And do they, with sacrilegious hands, attempt to violate this last refuge of the miserable, and to rob them of the only comfort that had survived the ravages of misfortune, malice, and tyranny ? Did it ever happen, that the influence of their execrable tenets, disturbed the tranquillity of virtuous retirement, deepened the gloom of human distress, ●

aggravated the horrors of the grave? Is it possible, that this may have happened in one single instance? Ye traitors to human kind, ye murderers of the human soul, how can ye answer for it to your own hearts? Surely, every spark of your generosity is extinguished for ever, if this consideration do not awaken in you the keenest remorse, and make you wish, in bitterness of soul,—But I remonstrate in vain. All this must have often occurred to you, and been as often rejected as utterly frivolous. Could I enforce the present topic by an appeal to your vanity, I might possibly make some impression. But to plead with you on the principles of benevolence or generosity, is to address you in a language which you do not, or you will not understand; and as to the shame of being convicted of absurdity, ignorance, or want of candour, you have long ago proved yourselves superior to the sense of it.—But let not the lovers of truth be discouraged. The fashion of sceptical and metaphysical systems passes away. Those unnatural productions, the vile effusion of a hard and stupid heart, that mistakes its own restlessness for the activity of genius, and its own captiousness for sagacity of understanding, may, like other monsters, please awhile by their singularity: but the charm is soon over; and the succeeding age will be astonished to hear, that their forefathers were deluded, or amused, with such fooleries.”

You, sir, have read the preceding paragraph before; but this letter may come into the hands of many, who have not. It is the alarum bell to the admirers of Mr. Hume; and it should be rung in their ears, till succeeded by the last trumpet.

And now, sir, will you give me leave to ask you a few questions? Why all this hurry and bustle, this eagerness to gratify the pretended “impatience of the public,”

and satisfy it, that our philosopher lived and died perfectly composed and easy? Was there, then, any suspicion, in Scotland, that he might not, at times, be quite composed and easy? Was there any particular book ever written against him, that shook his system to pieces, and reduced it to a heap of ruins, the success and eclat of which might be supposed to have hurt his mind, and to have affected his health*? Was there any author, whose name his friends never durst mention before him, and warned all strangers, who were introduced to him, against doing it, because he never failed; when by any accident it was done, to fly into a transport of passion and swearing? Was it deemed necessary, or expedient, on this account, that he should represent himself, and that you should represent him, perfectly secure of the growth and increase of his philosophic reputation, as if no book had been written, which had impaired it; judging it much easier to dissemble the fall of Dagon, than "to set him upon his stumps again?" I am a South Briton, and, consequently, not acquainted with what passes so far in the opposite quarter. You, sir, can inform us how these things are; and likewise, when the great work of benevolence and charity, of wisdom and virtue, shall be crowned by the publication of a treatise designed to prove the "soul's mortality," and another, to justify and recommend "self-murder."

Upon the whole, doctor, I think you will not succeed this time. You would persuade us, by the example of David Hume, esq. that atheism is the only cordial for low spirits, and the proper antidote against the fear of

* Dr. Beattie's Essay on Truth.—At the very period when Hume is reported to have been in the utmost tranquillity of spirits, none of his friends could venture to mention Dr. Beattie in his presence.

death. But, surely, he who can reflect, with complacency, on a friend thus misemploying his talents in his life, and then amusing himself with Lucian, whist, and Charon, at his death, may smile over Babylon in ruins ; esteem the earthquake which destroyed Lisbon, an agreeable occurrence ; and congratulate the hardened Pharaoh, on his overthrow in the Red sea. Drollery in such circumstances, is neither more nor less than

Moody madness, laughing wild,
Amid severest wo.

Would we know the baneful and pestilential influences of false philosophy on the human heart ? We need only contemplate them in this most deplorable instance of Mr. Hume.

These sayings, sir, may appear harsh ; but they are salutary. And if departed spirits have any knowledge of what is passing upon earth, that person will be regarded by your friend as rendering him the greatest service, who, by energy of expression, and warmth of exhortation, shall most contribute to prevent his writings from producing those effects upon mankind, which he no longer wishes they should produce.

By way of contrast to the behaviour of Mr. Hume at the close of a life, passed without God in the world, permit me, sir, to lay before you, the last sentiments of the truly learned, judicious, and admirable Hooker, who had spent his days in the service of his Maker and Redeemer.

After this manner spoke the author of the " Ecclesiastical Polity," immediately before he expired : " I have lived to see, that this world is made up of perturbations ; and I have been long preparing to leave it, and gathering comfort for the awful hour of making my

account with God, which I now apprehend to be near. And though I have, by his grace, loved him in my youth, and feared him in my age, and laboured to have a conscience void of offence, towards him, and towards all men ; yet,—if thou, Lord ! shouldst be extreme to mark what we have done amiss, who can abide it ? And, therefore, where I have failed, Lord, show mercy to me ; for I plead not my righteousness, but the forgiveness of my unrighteousness, through His merits who died to purchase pardon for penitent sinners. And since I owe thee a death, Lord, let it not be terrible, and then take thine own time ; I submit to it. Let not mine, O Lord, but thy will be done !—God hath heard my daily petitions ; for I am at peace with all men, and he is at peace with me. From such blessed assurance, I feel that inward joy which the world can neither give, nor take from me. My conscience bears me this witness ; and this witness makes the thoughts of death joyful. I could wish to live, to do the church more service : but I cannot hope it ; for my days are passed, as a shadow that returns not.”—More he would have spoken, but his spirits failed him ; and, after a short conflict between nature and death, a quiet sigh put a period to his last breath.

Doctor Smith, when the hour of his departure hence shall arrive, will copy the example of the believer, or of the infidel, as he pleases. I must freely own, I have no opinion of that reader's head, or heart, who will not exclaim, as I find myself obliged to do : “ Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his ! ”

I am, sir,

Your sincere well-wisher, &c.

LETTER II.

From a young lady under great affliction, to Dr.
Horne.*

November 6.

My dear sir,

With a heart almost broken with grief, I am going, I fear, to trouble you by pouring it forth. I have lost my father, my best friend, and every thing that was most valuable to me in the world! Perhaps, ere this, the melancholy tidings have reached your ears.

On Saturday morning last, he yielded his soul into the hands of his Maker. O, sir! paint to your imagination the wo and distraction that entered his house, in the moment of his dissolution! Had you heard the piercing cries that were uttered,—But what do I say? God forbid that your tender, your most affectionate heart, should have been a witness of the scene!

I was hardly able to bear the thoughts of surviving him: but, thank God, I am in some degree composed. I most earnestly repent of my sin, in forgetting for a moment that from His hand I receive good, and why not evil when he thinks fit?

Pray, sir, pardon the liberty I have taken in writing to you; but allow me to apologize in some measure, by telling you, that the day before my dearest father grew ill, he desired me to write; as, you may remember, he owed you a letter. “Perhaps,” said he smiling, “it will please the dear doctor.”

You will, no doubt, wonder what could take him off

* The writer of this letter was an elegant and accomplished young lady of the first distinction in Ireland, who had not completed her seventeenth year at the time of her father's death.

so suddenly. It was a disorder in the brain; not water, but something occasioned by a fulness in the head. He died on the sixth day after he was seized.

The day he was first affected, he came down to breakfast; but, alas! he had totally lost his senses. Think what I must have felt! The physicians all agreed, and thought till the very last, that his bodily ailments were not fatal, but that his understanding was gone for ever. Was it not a blessing then that God did not ordain him to outlive himself? I have been since thinking that I was permitted to see him in that most melancholy state, to fill my heart with this subject of thankfulness.

And let me cast my thoughts on that most amazing and blessed change he has undergone, from a world of pains and vexations at best, to join that blessed spirit, my dearest mother, and make one of the angelic choir that cease not, day and night, to sing hallelujahs. How this idea transports me from the world! God grant it may influence my life; that, when I come to die, it may be the death of the righteous, which is only to be attained by living their life!

Will you be so kind as to present my most affectionate respects to Mrs. Horne and your daughters? You will break these most dismal tidings to them; I am sure they will sympathize in my affliction.

I flatter myself that you will favour me with a line. What consolation must flow from your pen! And suffer me to assure you, that, next to the dear parent who is laid in the dust, I have revered, loved, and honoured you. If you can pardon me for thus troubling you, and you should wish to hear now and then how the mourners at —— go on, I shall have much pleasure in letting you know.

My poor brother is most deeply afflicted. My happi-

ness must now, in a great measure, rest upon his good conduct; and I think he will not disappoint me: thus, as one prop is withdrawn, the heart of man fondly clings to another.

Mrs. — is getting much better. Ever since we came home this year, we have been in daily expectation of her decease. What an amazement it is to her to find herself alive, surviving my father! She bears it like a Christian; and says, she needs not take her leave so soon to follow.

Farewell, most honoured sir! Believe me

Your most dutiful, most afflicted servant.

LETTER III.

Dr. Horne's answer to the preceding letter.

Canterbury, Nov. 11.

My dear madam,

Little did I think that a letter from ——— would afflict my soul; but yours received this morning has indeed done it. Seeing your hand, and a black seal, my mind foreboded what had happened. I made an attempt to read it to my wife and daughters; but—it would not do—I got no further than the first sentence; burst into a flood of tears, and was obliged to retreat into the solitude of my study, unfit for any thing, but to think on what had happened; then to fall upon my knees, and pray, that God would pour down his choicest blessings on the children of my departed friend, and, as their “father and their mother had forsaken them,” that HE would “take them up,” and support them in time and eternity.

You ask comfort of me: but your truly excellent letter has suggested comfort to me, from all the proper topics; and I can only reflect it back to you. All things consi-

dered, the circumstance which first marked the disorder may be termed a gracious dispensation. It at once rendered the event, one may say, desirable, which otherwise carried, in the face of it, so much terror and sorrow. Nothing else in the world could so soon, and so effectually, have blunted the edge of the approaching calamity, and reconciled to it minds full of the tenderest love and affection. To complete the only consolation that remained, which we all know to be the fact, Mr. ——— stood always so prepared, so firm in his faith, so constant in his Christian practice of every duty, that he could not be taken by surprise, or off his guard: the stroke must be to himself a blessing, whenever, or however, it came. His death was his birthday; and, like the primitive Christians, we should keep it as such, as a day of joy and triumph. Bury his body; but embalm his example, and let it diffuse its fragrance among you from generation to generation. Call him blessed, and endeavour to be like him; like him, in piety, in charity, in friendship, in courteousness, in temper, in conduct, in word, and in deed. His virtues compose a little volume, which your brother should carry in his bosom; and he will need no other, if that be well studied, to make him the gentleman and the Christian. You, my dear madam, will, I am sure, go on with diligence to finish the fair transcript you have begun.

Do not apologize for writing; but let me hear what you do, and what plan of life your brother thinks of pursuing. With kindest compliments from the sympathizing folks here, believe me ever, my dear madam,

Your faithful friend and servant,

George Horne.

CHAPTER XII.

LETTERS OF DR. JOHNSON.

LETTER I.

To Mr. Elphinston.

September 25, 1750.

Dear sir,

✓ You have, as I find by every kind of evidence, lost an excellent mother ; and I hope you will not think me incapable of partaking of your grief. I have a mother now eighty two years of age ; whom, therefore, I must soon lose, unless it please God that she rather should mourn for me. I read the letters, in which you relate your mother's death, to Mrs. Strahan ; and I think I do myself honour when I tell you that I read them with tears: but tears are neither to you nor to me of any farther use, when the tribute of nature has been paid. The business of life summons us away from useless grief, and calls us to the exercise of those virtues of which we are lamenting our deprivation. The greatest benefit which one friend can confer upon another, is to guard, and excite, and elevate his virtues. This, your mother will still perform, if you diligently preserve the memory of her life, and of her death : a life, so far as I can learn, useful and wise ; and a death resigned, peaceful, and holy. I cannot forbear to mention, that neither reason nor revelation denies you to hope, that you may increase her happiness by obeying her precepts ; and that she may, in her present state, look with pleasure upon every act of virtue to which her instructions, or ex-

ample, have contributed. Whether this is more than a pleasing dream, or a just opinion of separate spirits, is, indeed, of no great importance to us, when we consider ourselves as acting under the eye of God: yet surely there is something pleasing in the belief, that our separation from those whom we love is merely corporeal.

There is one expedient, by which you may, in some degree, continue your mother's presence. If you write down minutely what you remember of her from your earliest years, you will read it with great pleasure, and receive from it many hints of soothing recollection, when time shall remove her yet farther from you, and your grief shall be matured to veneration. To this, however painful for the present, I cannot but advise you, as to a source of comfort and satisfaction in the time to come: for all comfort and all satisfaction are sincerely wished you by, dear sir,

Your most obliged,

And most obedient servant,

Samuel Johnson.

LETTER II.

To Bennet Langton, esq.

May 6, 1755.

Sir,

It has been long observed, that men do not suspect faults which they do not commit: your own elegance of manners, and punctuality of complaisance, did not suffer you to impute to me that negligence of which I was guilty, and which I have not since atoned. I received both your letters: and I received them with pleasure proportionate to the esteem which so short an acquaintance strongly impressed; and which I hope to confirm by nearer knowledge, though I am afraid that gratification will be for a time withheld.

I have, indeed, published my book *, of which I beg to know your father's judgment, and yours; and I have now staid long enough to watch its progress into the world. It has, you see, no patrons; and, I think, it has yet had no opponents, except the critics of the coffee-house, whose outcries are soon dispersed into the air, and are thought on no more: from this, therefore, I am at liberty, and I think of taking the opportunity to make an excursion; and why not then into Lincolnshire? or, to mention a stronger attraction, why not to dear Mr. Langton? I will give the true reason, which I know you will approve:—I have a mother more than eighty years old, who has counted the days to the publication of my book, in hopes of seeing me; and to her, if I can disengage myself here, I resolve to go.

As I know, dear sir, that to delay my visit for a reason like this, will not deprive me of your esteem, I beg it may not lessen your kindness. I have very seldom received an offer of friendship which I so earnestly desire to cultivate and mature. I shall rejoice to hear from you, till I can see you, and I will see you as soon as I can; for when the duty that calls me to Lichfield, is discharged, my inclination will carry me to Langton. I shall delight to hear the ocean roar, or see the stars twinkle, in the company of men to whom Nature does not spread her volumes, or utter her voice, in vain.

Do not, dear sir, make the slowness of this letter a precedent for delay, or imagine that I approved the incivility which I have committed; for I have known you enough to love you, and sincerely to wish a further knowledge; and I assure you, once more, that to live in a house which contains such a father and such a son,

* His Dictionary.

will be accounted a very uncommon degree of pleasure by, dear sir,

Your most obliged, and

Most humble servant,

Samuel Johnson.

LETTER III.

To Bennet Langton, esq.

January 9, 1758.

Dearest sir,

I must have indeed slept very fast, not to have been awakened by your letter. None of your suspicions are true: I am not much richer than when you left me; and, what is worse, my omission of an answer to your first letter, will prove that I am not much wiser. But I go on as I formerly did, designing to be some time or other both rich and wise. Do you take notice of my example, and learn the danger of delay. When I was as you are now, towering in confidence of twenty one, little did I suspect that I should be at forty nine, what I now am.

But you do not seem to need my admonition. You are busy in acquiring and in communicating knowledge; and while you are studying, enjoy the end of study, by making others wiser and happier. I was much pleased with the tale that you told me of your being tutor to your sisters. I, who have no brothers nor sisters, look with some degree of envy on those who may be said to be born to friends; and I cannot see, without wonder, how rarely that native union is afterwards regarded. It sometimes, indeed, happens, that some supervenient cause of discord may overpower this original amity; but it seems to me more frequently thrown away with levity, or lost by negligence, than destroyed by injury or vio-

lence. We tell the ladies that good wives make good husbands ; I believe it is a more indubitable position that good brothers make good sisters.

I am satisfied with your stay at home, as Juvenal was with his friend's retirement to Cumæ : I know that your absence is best, though it be not best for me. Langton is a good Cumæ, but who must be Sibylla ? Mrs. Langton is as wise as Sibyl ; and she will live, if my wishes can prolong life, till she shall in time be as old. But she differs in this, that she has not scattered her precepts in the wind, at least not those which she bestowed upon you.

I have left off housekeeping ; and I therefore made presents of the game which you were pleased to send me. The pheasant I gave to Mr. Richardson, the bustard to Dr. Lawrence, and the pot I placed with miss Williams, to be eaten by myself. She desires that her compliments and good wishes may be accepted by the family ; and I make the same request for myself.

I wish I could tell you of any great good to which I am approaching ; but at present my prospects do not much delight me : however, I am always pleased when I find that you, dear sir, remember

Your affectionate, humble servant,

Samuel Johnson.

LETTER IV.

To Mr. Baretti, at Milan.

London, June 10, 1761.

You reproach me very often with parsimony of writing ; but you may discover by the extent of my paper, that I design to recompense rarity by length. A short letter to a distant friend is, in my opinion, an insult

like that of a slight bow, or cursory salutation ; a proof of unwillingness to do much, even where there is a necessity of doing something. Yet it must be remembered, that he who continues the same course of life, in the same place, will have little to tell. One week and one year are very like another. The silent changes made by time are not always perceived ; and if they are not perceived, they cannot be recounted. I have risen and lain down, talked and mused, while you have roved over a considerable part of Europe : yet I have not envied my Baretti any of his pleasures, though perhaps I have envied others his company ; and I am glad to have other nations made acquainted with the character of the English, by a traveller who has so nicely inspected our manners, and so successfully studied our literature.

I received your kind letter from Falmouth, in which you gave me notice of your departure from Lisbon ; and another from Lisbon, in which you told me that you were to leave Portugal in a few days. To either of these, how could any answer be returned ? I have had a third from Turin, complaining that I had not answered the former. Your English style still continues in its purity and vigour. With vigour your genius will supply it ; but its purity must be continued by close attention. To use two languages familiarly, and without contaminating one by the other, is very difficult ; and to use more than two, is hardly to be hoped. The praises which some have received for their multiplicity of languages, may be sufficient to excite industry, but can hardly generate confidence.

I know not whether I can heartily rejoice at the kind reception which you have found, or at the popularity to which you are exalted. I am willing that your merit should be distinguished ; but I cannot wish that your

affections may be gained. I would have you happy wherever you are: yet I would have you wish to return to England. If ever you visit us again, you will find the kindness of your friends undiminished. To tell you how many inquiries are made after you, would be tedious, or if not tedious would be vain: because you may be told in a very few words, that all who knew you, wish you well; and all whom you embraced at your departure, will caress you at your return.

By conducting Mr. Southwell to Venice, you fulfilled, I know, the original contract: yet I would wish you not wholly to lose him from your notice, but to recommend him to such acquaintance as may best secure him from suffering by his own follies, and to take such general care both of his safety and his interest as may come within your power. His relations will thank you for any such gratuitous attention: at least, they will not blame you for any evil that may happen, whether they thank you or not for any good.

The artists have instituted a yearly exhibition of pictures and statues, in imitation, as I am told, of foreign Academies. This year was the second exhibition. They please themselves much with the multitude of spectators, and imagine that the English school will rise in reputation. This exhibition has filled the heads of the artists and lovers of arts.—Surely life, if it is not long, is tedious, since we are forced to call in the assistance of so many trifles, to rid us of our time; of that time which never can return.

I know my Baretti will not be satisfied with a letter in which I give him no account of myself: yet what account shall I give him? I have not, since the day of our separation, suffered or done any thing considerable. I have hitherto lived without the concurrence of my own

judgment ; yet I continue to flatter myself, that, when you return, you will find me mended.

I hope you take care to keep an exact journal, and to register all occurrences and observations. You have given us good specimens in your letters from Lisbon. I wish you had staid longer in Spain, for no country is less known to the rest of Europe ; but the quickness of your discernment must make amends for the celerity of your motions. He that knows which way to direct his view, sees much in a little time.

Write to me very often, and I will not neglect to write to you. I may perhaps in time get something to write : at least, you will know by my letters, whatever else they may have or want, that I continue to be

Your most affectionate friend,

Samuel Johnson.

LETTER V.

To Dr. (afterwards sir George) Staunton.

June 1, 1762.

Dear sir,

I make haste to answer your kind letter, in hope of hearing again from you before you leave us. I cannot but regret that a man of your qualifications should find it necessary to seek an establishment in Guadaloupe. If a peace should restore that island to the French, I shall think it some alleviation of the loss, that it must likewise restore Dr. Staunton to the English.

It is a melancholy consideration, that so much of our time is necessarily to be spent upon the care of living, and that we can seldom obtain ease in one respect but by resigning it in another ; yet I suppose we are by this dispensation not less happy on the whole, than if the spontaneous bounty of Nature poured into our hands

all that we want. A few, if they were left thus to themselves, would, perhaps, spend their time in laudable pursuits; but the greater part would prey upon the quiet of each other, or, in the want of other objects, would prey upon themselves.

This, however, is our condition, which we must improve and solace as we can: and though we cannot always choose our place of residence, we may, in every place, find rational amusements, and possess, in every place, the comforts of piety and a pure conscience.

The new world must have many vegetables and animals with which philosophers are but little acquainted. I hope you will furnish yourself with some books of natural history, and some glasses and other instruments of observation. Trust as little as possible to report; examine all you can by your own senses. I do not doubt but you will be able to add much to knowledge, and, perhaps, to medicine. Wild nations trust to simples; and, perhaps, the Peruvian bark is not the only specific which those extensive regions may afford us.

Wherever you are, and whatever may be your fortune, be certain, dear sir, that you carry with you my kind wishes; and that whether you return hither, or stay in the other hemisphere, to hear that you are happy will give pleasure to

Your most affectionate, humble servant,

Samuel Johnson.

LETTER VI.

To Mr. Baretti.

London, July 20, 1762.

Sir,

However justly you may accuse me for want of punctuality in correspondence, I am not so far lost in

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negligence, as to omit the opportunity of writing to you, which Mr. Beauclerk's passage through Milan affords me.

As you have now been long away, I suppose your curiosity may pant for some news of your old friends. Miss Williams and I live much as we did. Miss Cottrell still continues to cling to Mrs. Porter. Mr. Reynolds gets six thousand a year. Levet is lately married, not without much suspicion that he has been wretchedly cheated in his match. Mr. Chambers is gone, for the first time, the circuit with the judges. Mr. Richardson's second daughter has married a merchant.

My vanity, or my kindness, makes me flatter myself, that you would rather hear of me than of those whom I have mentioned ; but of myself I have very little which I care to tell. Last winter I went down to my native town, where I found the streets much narrower and shorter than I thought I had left them, inhabited by a new race of people, to whom I was very little known. My play-fellows were grown old, and forced me to suspect, that I was no longer young. My only remaining friend has changed his principles, and has become the tool of the predominant faction. My daughter-in-law, from whom I expected most, and whom I met with sincere benevolence, has lost the beauty and gaiety of youth, without having gained much of the wisdom of age. I wandered about for five days, and took the first convenient opportunity of returning to a place, where, if there is not much happiness, there is, at least, such a diversity of good and evil, that slight vexations do not fix upon the heart.

I think in a few weeks to try another excursion; though to what end? Let me know, my Baretti, what has been the result of your return to your own country ; whether time has made any alteration for the better; and whether,

when the first raptures of salutation were over, you did not find your thoughts confessed their disappointment.

Moral sentences appear ostentatious and tumid, when they have no greater occasions than the journey of a wit to his native town: yet such pleasures and such pains make up the general mass of life; and as nothing is little to him who feels it with great sensibility, a mind able to see common incidents in their real state, is disposed by very common incidents to very serious contemplations. Let us trust that a time will come, when the present moment shall be no longer irksome; when we shall not borrow all our happiness from hope, which at last is to end in disappointment.

I beg that you will show Mr. Beauclerk all the civilities which you have in your power; for he has always been kind to me.

May you, my Barette, be very happy at Milan, or at some other place nearer to

Your most affectionate, humble servant,

Samuel Johnson.

LETTER VII.

To Mr. Barette.

December 21, 1762.

You are not to suppose, with all your conviction of my idleness, that I have passed all this time without writing to my Barette. I gave a letter to Mr. Beauclerk, who, in my opinion, and in his own, was hastening to Naples for the recovery of his health; but he has stopped at Paris, and I know not when he will proceed. Langton is with him.

I will not trouble you with speculations about peace and war. The good or ill success of battles and embassies extends itself to a very small part of domestic

life ; we have all good and evil, which we feel more sensibly than our petty part of public miscarriage or prosperity. I am sorry for your disappointment, with which you seem more touched than I should expect a man of your resolution and experience to be, did I not know that general truths are seldom applied to particular occasions ; and that the fallacy of our self-love extends itself as wide as our interest or affections. Every man believes that patrons are capricious ; but he excepts his own patron. We have all learned that greatness is negligent and contemptuous, and that, in courts, life is often languished away in ungratified expectation ; but he who approaches greatness, or glitters in a court, imagines that destiny has exempted him from the common lot.

Do not let such evils overwhelm you, as thousands have suffered, and thousands have surmounted : but turn your thoughts with vigour to some other plan of life ; and keep always in your mind, that, with due submission to Providence, a man of genius has seldom been ruined but by himself. Your patron's weakness or insensibility will finally do you little hurt, if he is not assisted by your own passions.

Of your love I know not the propriety, nor can I estimate the power ; but in love, as in every other passion, of which hope is the essence, we ought always to remember the uncertainty of events. I do not, however, pretend to have discovered that life has any thing more to be desired than a prudent and virtuous marriage ; therefore, I know not what counsel to give you.

If you can quit your imagination of greatness, and leave your hopes of preferment, to try once more the fortune of literature and industry, the way through France is now open. We flatter ourselves that we shall cultivate with great diligence the arts of peace ; and

every man will be welcome among us, who can teach us any thing which we do not know. For your part, you will find all your old friends willing to receive you.

I know not whether I have not sent you word that Huggins and Richardson are both dead. When we see our enemies and our friends gliding away before us, let us not forget that we are subject to the general law of mortality, and that we shall soon be where our doom will be fixed for ever.

I pray God to bless you ; and I am, sir,

Your most affectionate, humble servant,

Samuel Johnson.

Write soon.

LETTER VIII.

To James Boswell, esq. at Utrecht.

London, Dec. 8, 1763.

Dear sir,

You are not to think yourself forgotten, or neglected, that you have had yet no letter from me. I love to see my friends, to hear from them, to talk to them, and to talk of them : but it is not without a considerable effort of resolution that I prevail upon myself to write. I would not, however, gratify my own indolence by the omission of any important duty, or any office of real kindness. The topics with which those letters are commonly filled, that are written only for the sake of writing, I seldom shall think worth communicating ; but if I can have it in my power, to calm any harassing disquiet, to excite any virtuous desire, to rectify any important opinion, or fortify any generous resolution, you need not doubt but I shall at least wish to prefer the pleasure of gratifying a friend much less esteemed than

yourself, before the gloomy calm of idle vacancy. Whether I shall easily arrive at an exact punctuality of correspondence, I cannot tell.

You will, perhaps, wish to ask, what study I would recommend. I shall not speak of theology, because it ought not to be considered as a question whether you shall endeavour to know the will of God.

I shall, therefore, consider only such studies as we are at liberty to pursue or to neglect; and of these I know not how you will make a better choice, than by studying the civil law, as your father advises, and the ancient languages, as you had determined for yourself. Resolve, while you remain in any settled residence, to spend a certain number of hours every day amongst your books. The dissipation of thought, of which you complain, is nothing more than the vacillation of a mind suspended between different motives, and changing its direction as any motive gains or loses strength. If you can but kindle in your mind any strong desire, if you can but keep predominant any wish for some particular excellence or attainment, the gusts of imagination will break away, without any effect upon your conduct, and commonly without any traces left upon your memory.

There lurks, perhaps, in every human heart a desire of distinction, which inclines every man first to hope, and then to believe, that Nature has given him something peculiar to himself. This vanity makes one mind nurse aversions, and another actuate desires, till they rise by art much above their original state of power; and as affectation, in time, improves to habit, they at last tyrannise over him who, at first, encouraged them only for show. They are, like the viper in the bosom, who, while he was chill, was harmless; but when warmth gave him strength, exerted it in poison. You know a

gentleman, who, when first he set his foot in the gay world, as he prepared himself to whirl in the vortex of pleasure, imagined a total indifference and a universal negligence to be the most agreeable concomitants of youth, and the strongest indication of an airy temper and a quick apprehension. Vacant to every object, and sensible of every impulse, he thought that all appearance of diligence would deduct something from the reputation of genius; and hoped that he should appear to attain, amidst all the ease of carelessness, and all the tumult of diversion, that knowledge and those accomplishments, which mortals of the common fabric obtain only by mute abstraction and solitary drudgery. He tried this scheme of life awhile; and he was made weary of it by his sense and his virtue. He then wished to return to his studies: but finding long habits of idleness and pleasure harder to be cured than he expected, and still willing to retain his claim to some extraordinary prerogatives, he resolved the common consequences of irregularity into an unalterable decree of destiny, and concluded that Nature had originally formed him incapable of rational employment.

Let all such fancies, illusive and destructive, be banished henceforward from your thoughts. Resolve, and keep your resolution; choose, and pursue your choice. If you spend this day in study, you will find yourself still more able to study to-morrow; not that you are to expect that you shall at once obtain a complete victory. Depravity is not very easily overcome. Resolution will sometimes relax, and diligence will sometimes be interrupted; but let no accidental surprise or deviation, whether short or long, dispose you to despondency. Consider these failings as incident to all mankind. Begin again where you left off; and endeavour to avoid the seducements that prevailed over you before.

This, my dear Boswell, is advice which, perhaps, has been often given you, and given you without effect. But this advice, if you will not take from others, you must take from your own reflections, if you purpose to do the duties of the station to which the bounty of Providence has called you.

Let me have a long letter from you as soon as you can. I hope you continue your journal, and enrich it with many observations upon the country in which you reside.

I am, dear sir,

Your most affectionate servant,

Samuel Johnson.

LETTER IX.

To James Boswell, esq. at Paris.

Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, Jan. 14, 1766.

Dear sir,

Apologies are seldom of any use. We will delay till your arrival the reasons, good or bad, which have made me so sparing and ungrateful a correspondent. Be assured, for the present, that nothing has lessened either the esteem or the love with which I dismissed you at Harwich. Both have been increased by all that I have been told of you by yourself or others; and when you return, you will return to an unaltered, and, I hope, unalterable friend.

All that you have to fear from me, is the vexation of disappointing me. No man loves to frustrate expectations which have been formed in his favour; and the pleasure which I promise myself from your journals and remarks is so great, that perhaps no degree of attention or discernment will be sufficient to afford it. Come home, however, and take your chance. I long to see you, and to hear you; and I hope that we shall not be so long

separated again. Come home, and expect such a welcome as is due to him, whom a wise and noble curiosity has led, where perhaps no native of this country ever was before.

I have no news to tell you that can deserve your notice ; nor would I willingly lessen the pleasure that any novelty may give you at your return. I am afraid we shall find it difficult to keep among us a mind which has been so long feasted with variety. But let us try what esteem and kindness can effect.

As your father's liberality has indulged you with so long a ramble, I doubt not but you will think his sickness, or even his desire to see you, a sufficient reason for hastening your return. The longer we live, and the more we think, the higher value we learn to put on the tenderness of parents and of friends. Parents we can have but once; and he promises himself too much, who enters life with the expectation of finding many friends. Upon some motive, I hope, that you will be here soon ; and I am willing to think it will be an inducement to your return, that it is sincerely desired by, dear sir,

Your affectionate, humble servant,

Samuel Johnson.

LETTER X.

To Bennet Langton, esq.

Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, May 10, 1766.

Dear sir,

In supposing that I should be more than commonly affected by the death of Peregrine Langton*, you were not mistaken ; he was one of those whom I loved at once by instinct and by reason. I have seldom indulged more hope of any thing than of being able to

* Mr. Langton's uncle.

improve our acquaintance into friendship. Many a time have I placed myself again at Langton, and imagined the pleasure with which I should walk to Partney, in a summer morning: but this is no longer possible. We must now endeavour to preserve what is left us,—his example of piety and economy. I hope you make what inquiries you can, and write down what is told you. The little things which distinguish domestic characters are soon forgotten: if you delay to inquire, you will have no information; if you neglect to write, information will be vain.

His art of life certainly deserves to be known and studied. He lived in plenty and elegance upon an income, which, to many would appear indigent, and to most, scanty. How he lived, therefore, every man has an interest in knowing*. His death, I hope, was peaceful; it was surely happy.

I wish I had written sooner, lest, writing now, I

* He had laid down a plan of living proportioned to his income. He did not practise any extraordinary degree of parsimony; but endeavoured that in his family there should be plenty without waste. Not less than the tenth part of his income was set apart for charity. He was very considerate to his servants; he explained his injunctions to them distinctly; and, at their first coming into his service, steadily exacted a close and unremitting compliance with his rules: the servants finding this to be the case, soon grew habitually accustomed to their business; and then very little further attention was necessary. On extraordinary instances of good behaviour, or diligent service, he was not wanting in particular encouragements, and presents above their wages; and it is remarkable that he would permit their relations to visit them, and stay at his house two or three days at a time.—Every Monday morning he settled his family accounts, and so kept up a constant attention to the confining of his expenses within his income; and to do this more exactly, he compared those expenses with a computation he had made, how much that income would afford him every week

should renew your grief ; but I could not forbear saying what I have said.—Let me know how you all go on.—I continue to rise tolerably well, and I read more than I did.

I am, sir,

Your most affectionate servant,

Samuel Johnson.

LETTER XI.

To Mr. William Drummond.

Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, Aug. 13, 1766.

Sir,

I did not expect to hear that it could be, in an assembly convened for the propagation of Christian knowledge, a question whether any nation uninstructed in religion should receive instruction ; or whether that instruction should be imparted to them by a translation of the Holy Books into their own language*. If obe-

and day of the year. One of his economical practices was, as soon as any repair was wanting in or about his house, to have it immediately performed. When he had money to spare, he chose to lay in a provision of linen or clothes, or any other necessities ; as then, he said, he could afford it, which he might not be so well able to do when the actual want came. But the main particular that seems to have enabled him to do so much with his income, was, that he paid for every thing as soon as he had it, except, alone, what were current accounts, such as rent for his house and servants' wages ; and these he paid at the stated times with the utmost exactness. He gave notice to the tradesmen of the neighbouring towns that they should no longer have his custom, if they let any of his servants have any thing without their paying for it. Thus he put it out of his power to commit those imprudences to which people are liable who defer their payments.

* Some of the members of the society in Scotland for propagating Christian knowledge, had opposed the scheme of translating the Holy Scriptures into the Erse or Gaelic language, from political considerations of the disadvantage of keeping up the distinction between the Highlanders and the other inhabitants of North Britain.

dience to the will of God be necessary to happiness, and knowledge of his will be necessary to obedience, I know not how he who withholds this knowledge, or delays it, can be said to love his neighbour as himself. He, who voluntarily continues ignorance, is guilty of all the crimes which ignorance produces; as to him who should extinguish the tapers of a lighthouse, might justly be imputed the calamities of shipwrecks. Christianity is the perfection of humanity; and as no man is good but as he wishes the good of others, no man can be good in the highest degree, who wishes not to others the largest measure of the greatest good.

I am not very willing that any language should be totally extinguished. The similitude and derivation of languages afford the most indubitable proof of the tradition of nations, and the genealogy of mankind. They often add physical certainty to historical evidence; and often supply the only evidence of ancient migrations, and of the revolutions of ages which left no written monuments behind them.

Every man's opinions, at least his desires, are a little influenced by his favourite studies. My zeal for languages may seem, perhaps, rather over-heated, even to those by whom I desire to be well esteemed. To those who have nothing in their thoughts but trade or policy, present power, or present money, I should not think it necessary to defend my opinions: but with men of letters I would not unwillingly compound, by wishing the continuance of every language, however narrow in its extent, or however incommodious for common purposes, till it is repositied in some version of a known book, that it may be always hereafter examined and compared with other languages; and then permitting its disuse. For this purpose, the translation of the Bible is much to be

desired. It is not certain that the same method will not preserve the Highland language, for the purposes of learning, and abolish it from daily use. When the Highlanders read the Bible, they will naturally wish to have its obscurities cleared, and to know the history, collateral or appendant. Knowledge always desires increase: it is like fire, which must first be kindled by some external agent, but which will afterwards propagate itself. When the Highlanders once desire to learn, they will naturally have recourse to the nearest language by which that desire can be gratified; and one will tell another that if he would attain knowledge, he must learn English.

This speculation may, perhaps, be thought more subtle than the grossness of real life will easily admit. Let it, however, be remembered, that the efficacy of ignorance has long been tried, and it has not produced the consequence expected. Let knowledge, therefore, take its turn; and let the patrons of privation stand awhile aside, and admit the operation of positive principles.

Be pleased, sir, to assure the worthy man who is employed in the new translation, that he has my wishes for his success; and that, if here or at Oxford, I can be of any use, I shall think it more than honour to promote his undertaking.

I am sorry that I delayed so long to write.

I am, sir,

Your most humble servant,

Samuel Johnson.

LETTER XII.

To Mrs. Lucy Porter, his daughter-in-law.

Oxford, April 18, 1768.

My dear madam,

You have had a very great loss.— To lose an old friend, is to be cut off from a great part of the little pleasure that this life allows. But such is the condition of our nature, that as we live on we must see those whom we love drop successively, and find our circle of relation grow less and less, till we are almost unconnected with the world ; and then it must soon be our turn to drop into the grave. There is always this consolation, that we have one Protector who can never be lost but by our own fault ; and every new experience of the uncertainty of all other comforts, should determine us to fix our hearts where true joys are to be found. All union with the inhabitants of earth must in time be broken ; and all the hopes that terminate here, must, on one part or other, end in disappointment.

When I return to London, I will take care of your reading-glass. Whenever I can do any thing for you, remember, my dear, that one of my greatest pleasures is to please you.

The punctuality of your correspondence I consider as a proof of great regard. When we shall see each other, I know not ; but let us often think on each other, and think with tenderness. Do not forget me in your prayers. I have for a long time been very poorly : but of what use is it to complain ?

Write often, for your letters always give great pleasure to, my dear,

Your most affectionate &c.

Samuel Johnson.

LETTER XIII.

To James Boswell, esq.

Dear sir,

I am ashamed to think that since I received your letter, I have passed so many days without answering it.

There seems no great difficulty in resolving your doubts. The reasons for which you are inclined to visit London, are, I think, not of sufficient strength to answer the objections. That you should delight to come once a year to the fountain of intelligence and pleasure, is very natural ; but the desire both of information and of pleasure, must be regulated by propriety. Pleasure, which cannot be obtained but by unreasonable or unsuitable expense, must always end in pain : and pleasure, which must be enjoyed at the expense of another's pain, can never be such as a worthy mind can fully delight in. What improvement you might gain by coming to London, you may easily supply, or easily compensate, by enjoining yourself some particular study at home, or opening some new avenue to information. Edinburgh is not yet exhausted ; and I am sure you will find no pleasure here which can deserve either that you should anticipate any part of your future fortune, or that you should condemn yourself and your lady to penurious frugality for the rest of the year.

I need not tell you what regard you owe to Mrs. Boswell's entreaties ; or how much you ought to study the happiness of her, who studies yours with so much diligence, and of whose kindness you enjoy so good effects. Life cannot subsist in society but by reciprocal concessions. She permitted you to ramble last year ; you must permit her now to keep you at home.

Your last reason is so serious, that I am unwilling to oppose it. Yet you must remember, that your image of worshipping once a year in a certain place, in imitation of the Jews, is but a comparison, and "*simile non est idem.*" If the annual resort to Jerusalem was a duty to the Jews, it was a duty, because it was commanded: and you have no such command; therefore, no such duty. It may be dangerous to receive too readily, and indulge too fondly, opinions (from which perhaps no pious mind is wholly disengaged) of local sanctity and local devotion. You know what strange effects they have produced over a great part of the Christian world. I am now writing, and you, when you read this, are reading, under the eye of Omnipresence.

To what degree Fancy is to be admitted into religious offices, it would require much deliberation to determine. I am far from intending totally to exclude it. Fancy is a faculty bestowed by our Creator; and it is reasonable that all his gifts should be used to his glory, that all our faculties should co-operate in his worship: but they are to co-operate according to the will of HIM who gave them; according to the order which His wisdom has established. As ceremonies prudential or convenient are less obligatory than positive ordinances; as bodily worship is only the token to others or ourselves of mental adoration; so Fancy is always to act in subordination to Reason. We may take Fancy for a companion; but we must follow Reason as our guide. We may allow Fancy to suggest certain ideas in certain places; but Reason must always be heard, when she tells us, that those ideas and those places have no natural or necessary relation. When we enter a church, we habitually recall to mind the duty of adoration; but we must not omit adoration for want of a temple: because we know, and

we ought to remember, that the Universal Lord is every where present ; and that, therefore, to come to Iona, or to Jerusalem, though it may be useful, cannot be necessary.

Thus I have answered your letter ; and I have not answered it negligently. I love you too well to be careless when you are serious.

I think I shall be very diligent next week about our travels, which I have too long neglected.

I am, dear sir,

Your most &c.

Samuel Johnson.

LETTER XIV.

To Mrs. Thrale.

Lichfield, March 25, 1776.

Dear madam,

This letter will not, I hope, reach you many days before me. In a distress which can be so little relieved, nothing remains for a friend, but to come, and partake it.

Dear, sweet, little boy ! When I read the letter this day to Mrs. Aston, she said : " Such a death is the next to translation." But however I may convince myself of this, the tears are in my eyes: and yet I could not love him as you loved him ; nor reckon upon him for a future comfort as you and his father reckoned upon him.

He is gone, and we are going ! We could not have enjoyed him long ; and we shall not long be separated from him. He has probably escaped many such pangs as you are now feeling.

Nothing remains, but that with humble confidence we resign ourselves to Almighty Goodness: and fall down, without irreverent murmurs, before the Sovereign Distributor of good and evil, with hope that though sorrow

endureth for a night yet joy may come in the morning.

I have known you, madam, too long to think that you want any arguments for submission to the Supreme Will ; nor can my consolation have any effect but that of showing that I wish to comfort you. What can be done, you must do for yourself. Remember first, that your child is happy ; and then, that he is safe, not only from the ills of this world, but from those more formidable dangers which extend their mischief to eternity. You have brought into the world a rational being ; you have seen him happy during the little life that has been granted him ; and you can have no doubt but that his happiness is now permanent and immutable.

When you have obtained by prayer such tranquillity as nature will admit, force your attention, as you can, upon your accustomed duties and accustomed entertainments. You can do no more for our dear boy ; but you must not, therefore, think less on those whom your attention may make fitter for the place to which he is gone.

I am, dearest madam,

Your most affectionate, humble servant,

Samuel Johnson.

LETTER XV.

To James Boswell, esq.

Bolt Court, Nov. 16, 1776.

Dear sir,

I had great pleasure in hearing that you are at last on good terms with your father. Cultivate his kindness by all honest and manly means. Life is short ; no time can be afforded but for the indulgence of real sorrow, or contests upon questions seriously mo-

mentous. Let us not throw away any of our days upon useless resentment, or contend who shall hold out longest in stubborn malignity. It is best not to be angry ; and best, in the next place, to be quickly reconciled. May you and your father pass the remainder of your time in reciprocal benevolence !

Mrs. Williams, whom you may reckon as one of your well wishers, is in a feeble and languishing state. She went for some part of the autumn into the country, but she is little benefited ; and Dr. Lawrence confesses that his art is at an end. I am sorry for her pain, and more sorry for her decay.

I was some weeks this autumn at Brighthelmstone. The place was very dull, and I was not well ; the expedition to the Hebrides was the most pleasant journey that I ever made. Such an effort annually would give the world a little diversity.

Every year, however, we cannot wander ; and we must, therefore, endeavour to spend our time at home as well as we can. I believe it is best to throw life into a method, that every hour may bring its employment, and every employment have its hour. Xenophon observes, in his "Treatise of Economy," that if every thing is kept in a certain place, when any thing is worn out or consumed, the vacuity which it leaves will show what is wanting ; so, if every part of time has its duty, the hour will call into remembrance its proper engagement.

I have not practised all this prudence myself, but I have suffered much for want of it ; and I would have you, by timely recollection and steady resolution, escape from those evils which have lain heavy upon me.

I am, my dearest Boswell,

Your most humble servant,

Samuel Johnson.

LETTER XVI.

To Saunders Welsh, esq. at Rome.

February 3, 1778.

Dear sir,

To have suffered one of my best and dearest friends to pass almost two years in foreign countries without a letter, has a very shameful appearance of inattention. But the truth is, that there was no occasion on which I had any thing particular to say ; and general expressions of good will, I hope, our friendship is grown too solid to want.

Of public affairs you have information from the newspapers wherever you go ; and of other things, Mrs. Nollekins informs you. My intelligence could therefore be of no use ; and your daughter's letters made it unnecessary to write to you for information. I was likewise for some time out of humour, to find that motion, and nearer approaches to the sun, did not restore your health so fast as I expected. Of your health, the accounts have lately been more pleasing : and I have the gratification of imagining to myself a length of years which I hope you have gained, and of which the enjoyment will be improved by a vast accession of images and observations, that your journeys and various residence have enabled you to make and accumulate. You have travelled with this felicity, almost peculiar to yourself, that your companion is not to part from you at your journey's end ; but you are to live on together, to help each other's recollection, and to supply each other's omissions. The world has few greater pleasures than that which two friends enjoy, in tracing back, at some distant time, those transactions and events through which they have passed together. One of the old man's mis-

ries is, that he cannot easily find a companion able to partake with him of the past. You and your fellow-traveller have this comfort in store, that your conversation will not easily be exhausted; one will always be glad to say what the other will always be willing to hear.

That you may enjoy this pleasure long, your health must have your constant attention. I suppose you propose to return this year. Do not come hither before the height of summer, that you may fall gradually into the inconveniences of your native clime. After having travelled so far to find health, you must take care not to lose it at home; and I hope a little care will effectually preserve it.

Your daughter has doubtless kept a constant and copious journal. She must not expect to be welcome when she returns, without a great mass of information. Let her review her journal often, and set down what she finds herself to have omitted, that she may trust to memory as little as possible, for memory is soon confused by a quick succession of things; and she will grow every day less confident of the truth of her own narratives, unless she can recur to some written memorials. If she has satisfied herself with hints, instead of full representations, let her supply the deficiencies now while her memory is yet fresh, and while her father's memory may help her. If she observes this direction, she will bring home a book with which she may entertain herself to the end of life. If it were not now too late, I would advise her to note the impression which the first sight of any thing new and wonderful made upon her mind. Let her now set her thoughts down as she can recollect them; for faint as they may already be, they will grow every day fainter.

Perhaps I do not flatter myself unreasonably when I

imagine that you may wish to know something of me: I can gratify your benevolence with no account of health. The hand of time, or of disease, is very heavy upon me. I pass restless and uneasy nights; and restless nights make heavy days. But nothing will be mended by complaints, and therefore I will make an end. When we meet, we will try to forget our cares and our maladies; and contribute, as we can, to the cheerfulness of each other. If I had gone with you, I believe I should have been better; but I do not know that it was in my power.

I am, dear sir,

Your most humble servant,

Samuel Johnson.

LETTER XVII.

To a young clergyman in the country.

Bolt Court, Aug. 30, 1788.

Dear sir,

Not many days ago Dr. Lawrence showed me a letter, in which you make kind mention of me: I hope, therefore, you will not be displeased that I endeavour to preserve your good will by a few observations which your letter suggested to me.

You are afraid of falling into some improprieties in the daily service, by reading to an audience that requires no exactness. Your fear, I hope, secures you from danger. They who contract absurd habits, are such as have no fear. It is impossible to do the same thing very often, without some peculiarity of manner: but that manner may be good or bad, and a little care will at least preserve it from being bad; to make it very good, there must, I think, be something of natural or casual felicity, which cannot be taught.

Your present method of making your sermons seems very judicious. Few frequent preachers can be supposed to have Sermons more their own than yours will be. Take care to register, somewhere or other, the authors from whom your several discourses are borrowed; and do not imagine that you shall always remember even what perhaps you now think it impossible to forget.

My advice however is, that you attempt, from time to time, an original sermon; and, in the labour of composition, do not burden your mind with too much at once; do not exact from yourself, at one effort of excogitation, propriety of thought and elegance of expression. Invent first, and then embellish. The production of something, where nothing was before, is an act of greater energy than the expansion or decoration of the thing produced. Set down diligently your thoughts as they rise, in the first words that occur; and when you have matter you will easily give it form: nor, perhaps, will this method be always necessary, for, by habit, your thoughts and diction will flow together.

The composition of sermons is not very difficult: the divisions not only help the memory of the hearer, but direct the judgment of the writer; they supply sources of invention, and keep every part in its proper place.

What I like least in your letter is your account of the manners of your parish; from which I gather, that it has been long neglected by the parson. The dean of Carlisle, when he was a little rector in Northamptonshire, told me, that it might be discerned whether or not there was a clergyman resident in a parish, by the civil or savage manners of the people. Such a congregation as yours stand in much need of reformation; and I would not have you think it impossible to reform them.

A very savage parish was civilized by a decayed gentlewoman, who went thither to teach a petty school. My learned friend, Dr. Wheeler, of Oxford, when he was a young man, had the care of a neighbouring parish for fifteen pounds a year, which he was never paid ; but he counted it an advantage that it compelled him to make a sermon weekly. One woman he could not bring to the communion ; and, when he reproved or exhorted her, she only answered that she was no scholar. He was advised to set some good woman or man of the parish, a little wiser than herself, to talk to her in a language level to her mind. Such honest (I may call them holy) artifices, must be practised by every clergyman ; for all means must be tried by which souls may be saved. Talk to your people, however, as much as you can ; and you will find that the more frequently you converse with them upon religious subjects, the more willingly they will attend, and the more submissively they will learn. A clergyman's diligence always makes him venerable.

I think I have now only to say, that, in the momentous work which you have undertaken, I pray God to bless you.

I am, sir,

Your most humble servant,

Samuel Johnson

LETTER XVIII.

To Mrs. Thrale.—On the death of Mr. Thrale.

London, April 5, 1781.

Dearest madam,

Of your injunctions, to pray for you and write to you, I hope to leave neither unobserved. I am not without my part of the calamity. No death since that of my wife, has ever oppressed me like this.

But let us remember, that we are in the hands of HIM who knows when to give, and when to take away : who will look upon us, with mercy, through all our variations of existence ; and who invites us to call upon him in the day of trouble. Call upon HIM in this great revolution of life, and call with confidence. You will then find comfort for the past, and support for the future. HE who has given you happiness in marriage, to a degree, of which, without personal knowledge, I should have thought the description fabulous, can give you another mode of happiness, as a mother ; and at last, the happiness of losing all temporal cares in the thoughts of an eternity in Heaven.

I do not exhort you to reason yourself into tranquillity. We must first pray, and then labour ; first implore the blessing of God, and then use those means which he puts into our hands. Cultivated ground has few weeds : a mind occupied by lawful business, has little room for useless regret.

We read the will to-day : but I will not fill my first letter with any other account than that, with all my zeal for your advantage, I am satisfied ; and that the other executors, more used to consider property than I, commended it for wisdom and equity. Yet why should I not tell you that you have five hundred pounds for your immediate expenses, and two thousand pounds a year, with both the houses, and all the goods ?

Let us pray for one another, that the time, whether long or short, that shall yet be granted us, may be well spent ; and that when this life, which at the longest is very short, shall come to an end, a better may begin, which shall never end.

I am, dearest madam, yours, &c.

Samuel Johnson.

M

LETTER XIX.

To Bennet Langton, esq.

Bolt Court, March 20, 1782.

Dear sir,

It is now long since we saw one another ; and whatever has been the reason, neither you have written to me, nor I to you. To let friendship die away by negligence and silence, is certainly not wise. It is voluntarily to throw away one of the greatest comforts of this weary pilgrimage ; of which when it is taken finally away, he who travels on alone, will wonder how his esteem could be so little. Do not forget me ; you see that I do not forget you. It is pleasing in the silence of solitude, to think, that there is one at least, however distant, of whose benevolence there is little doubt, and whom there is yet hope of seeing again.

Of my life, from the time we parted, the history is mournful. The spring of last year deprived me of Thrale, a man whose eye for fifteen years had scarcely been turned upon me but with respect or tenderness ; for such another friend, the general course of human things will not suffer man to hope. I passed the summer at Streatham, but there was no Thrale ; and having idled away the summer with a weakly body and a neglected mind, I made a journey to Staffordshire on the edge of winter. The season was dreary ; I was sickly ; and I found the friends sickly whom I went to see. After a sorrowful sojourn, I returned to a habitation possessed for the present by two sick women ; where my dear old friend, Mr. Levett, (to whom, he used to tell me, I owe your acquaintance,) died a few weeks ago, suddenly in his bed ; there passed not, I believe, a minute between health and death. At night, as at Mrs. Thrale's, I was

ming in my chamber, I thought, with uncommon earnestness, that however I might alter my mode of life, or whithersoever I might remove, I would endeavour to retain Levett about me: in the morning, my servant brought me word that Levett was called to another state; a state for which, I think, he was not unprepared. How much soever I valued him, I now wish that I had valued him more.

I have myself been ill more than eight weeks of a disorder, from which, at the expense of about fifty ounces of blood, I hope I am now recovering.

You, dear sir, have, I trust, a more cheerful scene: you see George fond of his books, and my own little Jenny equal to the best; and in every thing that can contribute to your quiet or pleasure, you have lady Rothes ready to concur. May whatever you enjoy of good be increased, and whatever you suffer of evil be diminished!

I am, dear sir,

Your humble servant,

Samuel Johnson.

LETTER XX.

To Mr. Hector, at Birmingham.

Dear sir,

That you should have care or curiosity about my health, gives me that pleasure which every man feels from finding himself not forgotten. In age, we feel again that love of our native place and our early friends, which, in the bustle or amusement of middle life, was overborne and suspended. You and I should now naturally cling to one another: we have outlived most of those who could pretend to rival us in each other's kindness. In our walk through life, we have dropped our

companions ; and we are now to pick up such as may offer, or to travel on alone. You, indeed, have a sister, with whom you can divide the day : I have no natural friend left ; but Providence has been pleased to preserve me from neglect ; I have not wanted such alleviations of life as friendship could supply.—My health has been, from my twentieth year, such as has seldom afforded me a single day of ease : but it is at least not worse ; and I sometimes make myself believe that it is better. My disorders are, however, still sufficiently oppressive.

I think of seeing Staffordshire again this autumn ; and I intend to find my way through Birmingham, where I hope to see you and dear Mrs. Careless well.

I am, sir, your affectionate friend,

Samuel Johnson.

LETTER XXI.

To James Boswell, esq.

London, March 28, 1782.

Dear sir,

The pleasure which we used to receive from each other on Good-Friday and Easter-day, we must this year be content to miss. Let us, however, pray for each other ; and hope to see one another yet, from time to time, with mutual delight. My disorder has been a cold, which impeded the organs of respiration, and kept me many weeks in a state of great uneasiness ; but by repeated phlebotomy it is now relieved : and, next to the recovery of Mrs. Boswell, I flatter myself that you will rejoice at mine.

What we shall do in the summer, it is yet too early to consider. You want to know what you shall do now ; I do not think this time of bustle and confusion likely to produce any advantage to you. Every man has those to

reward and gratify, who have contributed to his advancement. To come hither with such expectations, at the expense of borrowed money, which you know not where to borrow, can hardly be considered as prudent. I am sorry to find, what your solicitation seems to imply, that you have already gone the whole length of your credit. This is to set the quiet of your whole life at hazard. If you anticipate your inheritance, you can at last inherit nothing; all that you receive must pay for the past. You must get a place; or pine in penury, with the empty name of a great estate. Poverty, my dear friend, is pregnant with so much temptation, and so much misery, that I cannot but earnestly enjoin you to avoid it. Live on what you have; live if you can on less: do not borrow either for vanity or pleasure; the vanity will end in shame, and the pleasure in regret. Stay, therefore, at home, till you have saved money for your journey hither.

Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell, who is, I hope, reconciled to me; and to the young people, whom I never have offended.

You have not told me the success of your plea against the solicitors.

I am, dear sir,

Your most affectionate

Samuel Johnson.

LETTER XXII.

To James Boswell, esq.

London, June 3, 1782.

Dear sir,

The earnestness and tenderness of your letter are such, that I cannot think myself showing it

more respect than it claims, by sitting down to answer it on the day on which I received it.

This year has afflicted me with a very irksome and severe disorder. My respiration has been much impeded, and much blood has been taken away. I am now harassed by a catarrhus cough, from which my purpose is to seek relief by change of air; and I am, therefore, preparing to go to Oxford.

Whether I did right in dissuading you from coming to London this spring, I will not determine. You have not lost much by missing my company; I have scarcely been well for a single week. I might have received comfort from your kindness; but you would have seen me afflicted, and, perhaps, found me peevish. Whatever might have been your pleasure or mine, I know not how I could have honestly advised you to come hither with borrowed money. Do not accustom yourself to consider debt only as an inconvenience: you will find it a calamity. Poverty takes away so many means of doing good, and produces so much inability to resist evil, both natural and moral, that it is by all virtuous means to be avoided. That a man whose fortune is very narrow, cannot help the needy, is evident; he has nothing to spare. But, perhaps, his advice or admonition may be useful. His poverty will lessen his influence: many more can find that he is poor, than that he is wise; and few will reverence the understanding that is of so little advantage to its owner. I say nothing of the personal wretchedness of a debtor, which, however, has passed into a proverb. Let it be remembered, that he who has money to spare, has it always in his power to benefit others; and of such power a good man must always be desirous.

I am pleased with your account of Easter. We shall

meet, I hope, in autumn, both well and both cheerful ; and part each the better for the other's company.

Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell.

I am, &c.

Samuel Johnson.

LETTER XXIII.

To James Boswell, esq.

London, Sept. 7, 1782.

Dear sir,

I have struggled through this year with so much infirmity of body, and so strong impressions of the fragility of life, that I cannot bear, without emotion, of the removal of any one, whom I have known, into another state.

Your father's death had every circumstance that could enable you to bear it: for it was at a mature age, and it was expected ; and, as his general life had been pious, his thoughts had doubtless for many years past been turned upon eternity. That you did not find him sensible must grieve you. His disposition towards you was undoubtedly that of a kind, though not of a fond father. Kindness, at least actual, is in our power, but fondness is not ; and if, by negligence or imprudence, you had extinguished his fondness, he could not, at will, rekindle it. Nothing then remained between you, but mutual forgiveness of each other's faults, and mutual desire of each other's happiness.

I shall long to know his final disposition of his fortune.

You, dear sir, have now a new station ; and have, therefore, new cares, and new employments. Life, as Cowley seems to say, ought to resemble a well ordered poem ; of which one rule generally received is, that the

exordium should be simple, and should promise little. Begin your new course of life with the least show and the least expense possible; you may at pleasure increase both, but you cannot easily diminish them. Do not think your estate your own, while any man can call upon you for money which you cannot pay; therefore, begin with timorous parsimony. Let it be your first care not to be in any man's debt.

When the thoughts are extended to a future state, the present life seems hardly worthy of all those principles of conduct, and maxims of prudence, which one generation of men has transmitted to another: but upon a closer view, when it is perceived how much evil is produced, and how much good is impeded, by embarrassment and distress, and how little room the expedients of poverty leave for the exercise of virtue; it is manifest that the boundless importance of the next life, enforces some attention to the interests of this.

Be kind to the old servants, and secure the good will of the agents and factors; do not disgust them by asperity, or unwelcome gaiety, or apparent suspicion. From them, you must learn the real state of your affairs, the characters of your tenants, and the value of your lands.

Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell. I think her expectations from air and exercise are the best that she can form. I hope she will live long and happily.

I received your letters only this morning.

I am, dear sir, yours, &c.

Samuel Johnson.

LETTER XXIV.

To Mrs. Thrale.

Bolt Court, Fleet Street, June 19, 1783.

Dearest madam,

I am sitting down in no cheerful solitude, to write a narrative which would once have affected you with tenderness and sorrow; but which you will perhaps pass over now with the careless glance of frigid indifference. For this diminution of regard, however, I know not whether I ought to blame you, who may have reasons which I cannot know; and I do not blame myself, who have for a great part of human life done you what good I could, and have never done you evil.

I had been disordered in the usual way; and had been relieved by the usual methods, by opium and cathartics; but I had rather lessened my dose of opium. On Monday, the sixteenth, I sat for my picture; and I walked a considerable way with little inconvenience. In the afternoon and evening, I felt myself light and easy, and began to plan schemes of life. Thus I went to bed: and, in a short time, I waked and sat up, as has been long my custom; when I felt a confusion and indistinctness in my head, which lasted, I suppose, about half a minute. I was alarmed; and I prayed to God, that however he might afflict my body, he would spare my understanding. This prayer, that I might try the integrity of my faculties, I made in Latin verse. The lines were not very good, but I knew them not to be very good: I made them easily, and concluded myself to be unimpaired in my faculties.

Soon after, I perceived that I had suffered a paralytic stroke, and that my speech was taken from me. I had no pain, and so little dejection in this dreadful state, that

I wondered at my own apathy ; and I considered that perhaps death itself when it should come, would excite less horror than seems now to attend it.

In order to rouse the vocal organs, I took two drams ; and I put myself into violent motion : but all was in vain. I then went to bed ; and, strange as it may seem, I think, I slept. When I saw light, it was time to contrive what I should do. Though God stopped my speech, he left me my hand ; I enjoyed a mercy which was not granted to my dear friend Lawrence, who now perhaps overlooks me as I am writing, and rejoices that I have what he wanted. My first note was necessarily to my servant, who came in talking ; and who could not immediately comprehend why he should read what I put into his hands.

I then wrote a card to Mr. Allen, that I might have a discreet friend at hand to act as occasion should require. In penning this note I had some difficulty ; my hand, I knew not how nor why, made wrong letters. I then wrote to Dr. Taylor to come to me, and bring Dr. Heberden ; and I sent to Dr. Brocklesby, who is my neighbour. My physicians are very friendly, and very disinterested ; and they give me great hopes : but you may imagine my situation. I have so far recovered my vocal powers, as to repeat the Lord's Prayer with no very imperfect articulation. My memory, I hope, yet remains as it was ; but such an attack produces solicitude for the safety of every faculty.

How this will be received by you, I know not. I hope you will sympathize with me. I hope that what, when I could speak, I spoke of you, and to you, will, in a sober and serious hour, be remembered by you ; and surely it cannot be remembered but with some degree of kindness. I have loved you with virtuous affec-

tion; I have honoured you with sincere esteem. Let not all our endearments be forgotten; but let me have, in this great distress, your pity and your prayers. You see I yet turn to you with my complaints as a settled and unalienable friend; do not drive me from you, for I have not deserved either neglect, or hatred.

To the girls, who do not write often, (for Susy has written only once, and Miss Thrale owes me a letter,) I earnestly recommend, as their guardian and friend, that they remember their Creator in the days of their youth.

O God! give me comfort and confidence in Thee; forgive my sins; and, if it be thy good pleasure, relieve my diseases for Jesus Christ's sake!

I am, &c.

Samuel Johnson.

LETTER XXV.

To Mrs. Thrale.

London, Nov. 13, 1783.

Dear madam,

Since you have written to me with the attention and tenderness of ancient time, your letters give me a great part of the pleasure which a life of solitude admits. You will never bestow any share of your good will on one who deserves it better. Those who have loved longest, love best. A sudden blaze of kindness may by a single blast of coldness be extinguished; but that fondness which length of time has connected with many circumstances and occasions, though it may for a while be suppressed by disgust or resentment, with or without a cause, is hourly revived by accidental recollection. To those who have lived long together, every thing heard and every thing seen recalls some pleasure communicated, or some benefit conferred, some

petty quarrel, or some slight endearment. Esteem of great powers, or amiable qualities newly discovered, may embroider a day or a week; but a friendship of twenty years is interwoven with the texture of life. A friend may be often found and lost; but an *old friend* never can be found, and Nature has provided that he cannot easily be lost.

I have not forgotten the Davenants, though they seem to have forgotten me. I began very early to tell them what they have commonly found to be true. I am sorry to hear of their building. I have always warned those whom I loved against that mode of ostentatious expense.

The frequency of death, to those who look upon it in the leisure of Areadia, is very dreadful. We all know what it should teach us; let us all be diligent to learn. Lucy Porter has lost her brother. But whom I have lost—let me not now remember. Let not your loss be added to the mournful catalogue. Write soon again to, madam, your &c.

Samuel Johnson.

LETTER XXVI.

To Mrs. Thrale.

London, Nov. 20, 1783.

Dear madam,

I began to grieve and wonder that I had no letter; but not being much accustomed to fetch in evil by circumspection or anticipation, I did not suspect that the omission had so dreadful a cause as the sickness of one of your dear children. As her physician thought so well of her when you wrote, I hope she is now out of danger. You do not tell me her disease; and perhaps you have not been able yourself fully to understand it.

That frigid stillness with which my pretty Sophy melts away, exhibits a temper very incommodious in sickness, and by no means amiable in the tenour of life. Incommunicative taciturnity neither imparts nor invites friendship, but reposes on a stubborn sufficiency self-centred, and neglects the interchange of that social officiousness by which we are habitually endeared to one another. They who mean to make no use of friends, will be at little trouble to gain them; and to be without friendship, is to be without one of the first comforts of our present state. To have no assistance from other minds, in resolving doubts, in appeasing scruples, in balancing deliberations, is a very wretched destitution. If therefore your daughters have this silence by temper, do not let them have it by principle; show them that it is a perverse and inordinate disposition, which must be counteracted and reformed. Have I said enough?

Poor Dr. Taylor represents himself as ill; and I am afraid he is worse than in the summer.—My nights are very bad; but of the sarcocele I have now little except the memory.

I am, madam, your &c.

Samuel Johnson.

LETTER XXVII.

To Mrs. Thrale.

London, Nov. 29, 1783.

Dear madam,

The life of my dear, lovely miss Sophy is safe! let us return thanks to the great Giver of existence; and pray that her continuance amongst us may be a blessing to herself, and to those who love her.

Now she is recovered, she must write me a little history of her sufferings, and impart her schemes of study

and improvement. Life, to be worthy of a rational being, must be always in progression; we must always purpose to do more or better than in time past. The mind is enlarged and elevated by mere purposes, though they end as they begin, by airy contemplation. We compare and judge, though we do not practise.

She will go back to her arithmetic again: a science which will always delight her more, as by advancing further she discerns more of its use; and a science suited to Sophy's ease of mind, for you told me, last winter, that she loved metaphysics more than romances. Her choice is certainly as laudable as it is uncommon.

God bless you and your children! so says, dear madam, your old friend,

Samuel Johnson.

LETTER XXVIII.

To Mrs. Thrale.

London, Dec. 27, 1783.

Dear madam,

The time of the year, for I hope the fault is rather in the weather than in me, has been very hard upon me. The muscles of my breast are much convulsed. Dr. Heberden recommends opiates, of which I have such horror that I do not think of them but in extremes. I was however driven to them last night for refuge. Having taken the usual quantity, I durst not go to bed, for fear of that uneasiness to which a supine posture exposes me: but I rested all night in a chair, with much relief; and I have been to-day more warm, active, and cheerful.

You have more than once wondered at my complaint of solitude, when you hear that I am crowded with visits. Visitors are no proper companions in the cham-

ber of sickness. They come when I could sleep or read ; they stay till I am weary ; they force me to attend when my mind calls for relaxation, and to speak when my powers will hardly actuate my tongue. The amusements and consolations of languor and depression, are conferred by familiar and domestic companions ; who can be visited or called at will, and can occasionally be quitted or dismissed ; who do not obstruct accommodation by ceremony, or destroy indolence by awakening effort.

Such society I had with Levet and Williams ; such I had where—I am never likely to have it more.

I wish, dear lady, to you and your dear girls many a cheerful and pious Christmas.

I am your &c.

Samuel Johnson.

LETTER XXIX.

To the rev. Dr. Taylor.

London, April 12, 1784.

Dear sir,

What can be the reason that I do not hear from you ? I hope nothing disables you from writing. Do not omit giving me the comfort of knowing, that, after all my losses, I have yet a friend left.

My life is very solitary, and very cheerless. Though it has pleased God wonderfully to deliver me from the dropsy, I am still very weak ; and I have not passed the door since the thirteenth of December. I hope for some help from warm weather, which will surely come in time. I could not have the consent of the physicians to go to church yesterday ; I therefore received the holy sacrament at home, in the room where I communicated with dear Mrs. Williams, a little before her death.

It is vain to look round for that help which cannot be

had. Yet we hope and hope, and fancy that he who has lived to-day may live to-morrow. But let us learn to derive our hope only from God.

In the mean time, let us be kind to one another. I have no friend now living, but you and Mr. Hector, that was the friend of my youth. Do not neglect, dear sir,

Yours affectionately,

Samuel Johnson.

CHAPTER XIII.

LETTERS OF MR. COWPER.

LETTER I.

To Joseph Hill, Esq.

Huntingdon, June 24, 1765.

Dear Joe,

The only recompense I can make you for your kind attention to my affairs, during my illness, is to tell you, that, by the mercy of God, I am restored to perfect health, both of mind and body. This, I believe, will give you pleasure; and I would gladly do any thing from which you could receive it.

I left St Alban's on the seventeenth, and arrived that day at Cambridge; spent some time there with my brother; and came hither on the twenty second. I have a lodging that puts me continually in mind of our summer excursions; we have had many worse, and except the size of it, (which however is sufficient for a single man,) but few better. I am not quite alone, having brought a servant with me from St. Alban's; who is the very mirror of fidelity and affection for his master. The Turkish Spy says, he kept no servant because he would not have an enemy in his house; I hired mine, because I would have a friend. Men do not usually bestow these encomiums on their lackeys; nor do they usually deserve them: but I have had experience of mine, both in sickness and in health; and I never saw his fellow.

The river Ouse, (I forget how they spell it,) is the most agreeable circumstance in this part of the world. At this town, it is, I believe, as wide as the Thames at Windsor: nor does the silver Thames better deserve

that epithet, nor has it more flowers upon its banks ; these being attributes which, in strict truth, belong to neither. There is salmon in both. The Ouse is a noble stream to bathe in ; and I shall make that use of it three times a week, having introduced myself to it, for the first time, this morning.

I beg you will remember me to all my friends ; which is a task that will cost you no great pains to execute. Particularly remember me to those of your own house ; and believe me your very affectionate

William Cowper.

LETTER II.

To lady Hesketh.

Huntingdon, July 1, 1765.

My dear Lady Hesketh,

Since the visit you were so kind as to pay me in the Temple, (the only time I ever saw you without pleasure,) what have I not suffered ! And since it has pleased God to restore me to the use of my reason, what have I not enjoyed ! You know by experience, how pleasant it is to feel the first approaches of health after a fever ; but, oh the fever of the brain ! to feel the quenching of that fire, is indeed a blessing which I think it is impossible to receive without the most consummate gratitude. Terrible as this chastisement has been, I acknowledge in it the hand of an infinite Justice ; nor is it at all more difficult for me to perceive in it the hand of an infinite Mercy likewise, when I consider the effect it has had upon me. I am exceedingly thankful for it ; and, without hypocrisy, esteem it the greatest blessing, next to life itself, which I ever received from the Divine bounty. I pray God that I may always retain this sense of it ; and then I am sure I shall continue to be as I am at present, really happy.

I write thus to you that you may not think me a forlorn and wretched creature; which you might be apt to do, considering my very distant removal from every friend I have in the world: a circumstance, which before this calamity befel me, would undoubtedly have made me so. But my affliction has taught me a road to happiness, which, without it, I should never have found; and I know, and experience every day, that the mercy of God to him who believes himself the object of it, is more than sufficient to compensate for the loss of every other blessing.

You may now inform all those who, you think, are really interested in my welfare, that they have no need to be apprehensive on the score of my happiness at present. And you yourself will believe that my happiness is no dream, because I have told you the foundation on which it is built. What I have written, would appear like enthusiasm to many; for we are apt to give that name to every warm affection of the mind in others, which we have not experienced in ourselves: but to you, who have so much to be thankful for, and a temper inclined to gratitude, it will not appear so.—I beg you will give my love to sir Thomas; and believe that I am much obliged to you both, for inquiring after me at St. Albans.

Yours ever,

William Cowper.

LETTER III.

To lady Hesketh.

Huntingdon, July 4, 1765.

Being just emerged from the Ouse, I sit down to thank you, my dear cousin, for your friendly and comfortable letter.

How naturally does affliction make us Christians!

When all human help is vain, and the whole earth too poor and trifling to furnish us with one moment's peace, how impossible is it then to avoid looking at the Gospel!

I reckon it one instance of the Providence that has attended me throughout this whole affliction, that instead of being delivered into the hands of one of the London physicians, (who were so much nearer, that I wonder I was not,) I was carried to Dr. Cotton. I was not only treated by him with the greatest tenderness, while I was ill, and attended with the utmost diligence; but when my reason was restored to me, and I had so much need of a religious friend to converse with, to whom I could open my mind without reserve, I could hardly have found a fitter person for the purpose. My eagerness and anxiety to settle my opinions on religious subjects, made it necessary that while my mind was yet weak, and my spirits were uncertain, I should have some assistance. The doctor was as ready to administer relief to me in this article likewise, and as well qualified to do it, as in that which was more immediately his province. How many physicians would have thought this an irregular appetite, and a symptom of remaining madness! But if it were so, my friend was as mad as myself; and it is well for me that he was so.

My dear cousin, you know not half the deliverances I have received: my brother is the only one in the family who does. My recovery is indeed a signal one. My future life must express my thankfulness; for by words I cannot do it.

I pray God to bless you, and my friend sir Thomas.

Yours ever,

William Cowper.

LETTER IV.

To lady Hesketh.

July 12, 1765.

My dear cousin,

You are very good to me ; and if you will only continue to write at such intervals as you find convenient, I shall receive all that pleasure, which I proposed to myself from our correspondence. I am not so unreasonable as to expect you should perform this act of friendship so frequently as myself ; for you live in a world swarming with engagements, and my hours are almost all my own. You must every day be employed in doing what is expected from you by a thousand others ; and I have nothing to do but what is most agreeable to myself.

Our mentioning Newton's treatise on the Prophecies, brings to my mind an anecdote of Dr. Young, who, you know, died lately at Welwyn. Dr. Cotton, who was intimate with him, payed him a visit about a fortnight before he was seized with his last illness. He then seemed to be in perfect health. The antiquity of his person, the gravity of his utterance, and the earnestness with which he discoursed about religion, gave him, in the doctor's eye, the appearance of a prophet. They had been delivering their sentiments upon this book of Newton's, when Young closed the conference thus : " My friend, there are two considerations upon which my faith in Christ is built as upon a rock. The fall of man, the redemption of man, and the resurrection of man, the three cardinal articles of our religion, are such as human ingenuity could never have invented ; therefore, they must be Divine. The other argument is this : if the prophecies have been fulfilled, (of which there is

abundant demonstration,) the Scripture must be the Word of God ; and if the Scripture is the Word of God, Christianity must be true."

This treatise on the Prophecies proves the truth of religion, in a manner that never has been, nor ever can be controverted. But I leave you to the book itself. There are parts of it, which may possibly afford you less entertainment than the rest ; but in the main it is so interesting, and you are so fond of what is so, that I am sure you will like it.

My dear cousin, how happy am I in having a friend, to whom I can open my heart upon these subjects ! I have many intimates in the world, and I have had many more than I shall have hereafter, to whom a long letter, upon these most important articles, would appear tiresome at least, if not impertinent. But I am not afraid of meeting with that reception from you, who have never yet made it your interest, that there should be no truth in the Word of God. May this everlasting truth be your comfort while you live ; and attend you, with peace and joy, in your last moments ! I love you too well not to make this a part of my prayers ; and when I remember my friends on these occasions, there is no likelihood that you can be forgotten.

Yours, ever,

William Cowper.

P. S. Cambridge.—I add this postscript at my brother's rooms. He desires to be affectionately remembered to you ; and if you are in town about a fortnight hence, when he proposes to be there himself, he will take a breakfast with you.

LETTER V.

To lady Heaketh.

Huntingdon, Aug. 1, 1765.

My dear cousin,

If I were to measure your obligation to write, by my own desire to hear from you, I should call you an idle correspondent if a post went by without bringing a letter: but I am not so unreasonable; on the contrary, I think myself very happy in hearing from you upon your own terms, as you find most convenient.

Your short history of my family is a very acceptable part of your letter. If they really interest themselves in my welfare, it is a mark of their great charity for one who has been a disappointment and a vexation to them, ever since he has been of consequence enough to be either. My friend the major's behaviour to me, after all he suffered by my abandoning his interest and my own, in so miserable a manner, is a noble instance of generosity, and true greatness of mind: and indeed, I know no man in whom those qualities are more conspicuous; one needs only furnish him with an opportunity to display them, and they are always ready to show themselves in his words and actions, and even in his countenance, at a moment's warning. I have great reason to be thankful: I have lost none of my acquaintance, but those whom I determined not to keep. I am sorry this class is so numerous. What would I not give that every friend I have in the world, were not almost but altogether a Christian! My dear cousin, I am half afraid to talk in this style, lest I should seem to indulge a censorious humour; instead of hoping, as I ought, the best for all men. But what can be said

against ocular proof; and what is hope when it is built upon presumption? To use the most holy name in the universe for no purpose, or a bad one, contrary to God's own express commandment; to pass the day, and the succeeding days, weeks, months, and years, without one act of private devotion, one confession of our sins, or one thanksgiving for the numberless blessings we enjoy; to hear the Word of God in public, with a distracted attention, or with none at all; what is this but to live without God in the world? Many causes may be assigned for this anti-christian spirit, so prevalent among men; but one of the principal I take to be, their forgetfulness that they have the Word of God in their possession.

My friend, sir William Russel, was distantly related to a very accomplished man, who, though he never believed the Gospel, admired the Scriptures as the sublimest compositions in the world, and often read them. I have been intimate myself with a man of fine taste, who has confessed to me, that though he could not subscribe to the truth of Christianity itself, yet he never could read St. Luke's account of our Saviour's appearance to the two disciples going to Emmaus, without being wonderfully affected by it; and he thought that if the stamp of Divinity could any where be found in Scripture, it was strongly marked, and visibly impressed, upon that passage. If these men, whose hearts were chilled with the darkness of infidelity, could find such charms in the mere style of the Scripture, what must they find there, whose eye penetrates deeper than the letter, and who firmly believe themselves interested in all the invaluable privileges of the Gospel? "He that believeth on me, is passed from death unto life," though it is as plain a sentence as words can form, has

more beauties in it for such a person, than all the labours of which antiquity can boast. If my poor man of taste, whom I have just mentioned, had searched a little further, he might have found other parts of the sacred history as strongly marked with the characters of Divinity, as that he mentioned. The parable of the prodigal son, the most beautiful fiction that ever was invented; our Saviour's speech to his disciples, with which he closes his earthly ministration, full of the sublimest dignity, and tenderest affection; surpass every thing that I ever read, and, like the Spirit by which they were dictated, fly directly to the heart. If the Scripture did not disdain all affectation of ornament, one should call these, and such as these, the ornamental parts of it: but the matter is that, upon which it principally stakes its credit with us; and the style, however excellent and peculiar to itself, is only one of those many external evidences by which it recommends itself to our belief.

I shall be very much obliged to you for the book you mention; you could not have sent me any thing that would have been more welcome, unless you had sent me your own meditations instead of them.

Yours,

William Cowper.

LETTER VI.

To lady Hesketh.

Sept. 4, 1765.

Though I have some very agreeable acquaintance at Huntingdon, my dear cousin, none of their visits are so agreeable as the arrival of your letters. I thank you for that, which I have just received from Droxford; and particularly for that part of it, where you give me an unlimited liberty on the subject, on

which I have already so often written. Whatever interests us deeply, as naturally flows into the pen, as it does from the lips, when every restraint is taken away, and we meet with a friend indulgent enough to attend to us. How many, in all that variety of characters, with whom I am acquainted, could I find, after the strictest search, to whom I could write, as I do to you? I hope the number will increase.

Poor ——— ! I have heard the whole of his history ; and I can only lament : I am sure I can make no apology for him. Two of my friends have been cut off during my illness, in the midst of such a life, as it is frightful to reflect upon ; and here am I, in better health and spirits, than I can almost remember to have enjoyed before, after having spent months in the apprehension of instant death. How mysterious are the ways of Providence ! Why did I receive grace and mercy ? Why was I preserved, afflicted for my good, received, as I trust, into favour, and blessed with the greatest happiness I can ever know, or hope for, in this life ; while these were overtaken by the great arrest, unawakened, unrepenting, and every way unprepared for it ? His infinite Wisdom, to whose infinite Mercy alone I owe it all, can solve these questions, and none beside him. If a free-thinker, as many a man miscalls himself, could be brought to give a serious answer to them, he would certainly say : “ Without doubt, sir, you were in great danger ; you had a narrow escape ; a most fortunate one, indeed.” How excessively foolish, as well as shocking ! as if life depended upon luck ; and all that we are, or can be, all that we have or hope for, could possibly be referred to accident. Yet to this freedom of thought, it is owing that He, who, as our Saviour tells us, is thoroughly

apprized of the death of the meanest of his creatures, is supposed to leave those, whom he has made in his own image, to the mercy of chance ; and to this, therefore, it is likewise owing, that the correction, which our heavenly Father bestows upon us, that we may be fitted to receive his blessing, is so often disappointed of its benevolent intention, and that men despise the chastening of the Almighty. Fevers, and all diseases, are accidents ; and long life, recovery, at least, from sickness, is the gift of the physician. No man can be a greater friend to the use of means on these occasions than myself ; for it were presumption and enthusiasm to neglect them. God has endued them with salutary properties on purpose that we may avail ourselves of them ; otherwise that part of his creation were in vain. But to impute our recovery to the medicine, and to carry our views no further, is to rob God of his honour ; and is saying in effect, that he has parted with the keys of life and death, and, by giving to a drug the power to heal us, has placed our lives out of his own reach. He that thinks thus, may as well fall upon his knees at once, and return thanks to the medicine that cured him ; for it was certainly more immediately instrumental in his recovery, than either the apothecary or the doctor.

My dear cousin, a firm persuasion of the superintendence of Providence over all our concerns, is absolutely necessary to our happiness. Without it, we cannot be said to believe in the Scripture, or practise any thing like resignation to the Divine will. If I am convinced that no affliction can befall me, without the permission of God, I am convinced likewise, that he sees, and knows, that I am afflicted : believing this, I must, in the same degree, believe that if I pray to him for

deliverance, he hears me ; I must needs know likewise, with equal assurance, that if he hears, he will also deliver me, if that will upon the whole be most conducive to my happiness ; and if he does not deliver me, I may be well assured, that he has none but the most benevolent intention in declining it. He made us, not because we could add to his happiness, which was always perfect, but that we might be happy ourselves ; and will he not, in all his dispensations towards us, even in the minutest, consult that end for which he made us ? To suppose the contrary, is, (which we are not always aware of,) affronting every one of his attributes ; and, at the same time, the certain consequence of disbelieving his care for us, is, that we renounce utterly our dependence upon him. In this view it will appear plainly, that the line of duty is not stretched too tight, when we are told, that we ought to accept every thing at his hands as a blessing ; and to be thankful even while we smart under the rod of iron, with which he sometimes rules us. Without this persuasion, every blessing, however we may think ourselves happy in it, loses its greatest recommendation, and every affliction is intolerable. Death itself must be welcome to him, who has this faith ; and he, who has it not, must aim at it, if he is not a madman.

You cannot think how glad I am to hear, you are going to commence lady, and mistress, of Freemantle*. I know it well, and I could go to it from Southampton blindfold. You are kind to invite me to it, and I shall be so kind to myself as to accept the invitation ; though I should not, for a slight consideration, be prevailed upon to quit my beloved retirement at Huntingdon.

Yours ever,

— William Cowper.

* A villa near Southampton.

LETTER VII.

To lady Hesketh.

Huntingdon, Sept. 14, 1765.

My dear cousin,

The longer I live here, the better I like the place, and the people who belong to it. I am on very good terms with not less than five families, besides two or three odd scrambling fellows like myself. The last acquaintance I made here is with the race of the Unwins, consisting of father and mother, son and daughter; the most comfortable, social folks you ever knew. The son is about twenty one years of age; one of the most unreserved and amiable young men, with whom I ever conversed. He is not yet arrived at that time of life, when suspicion recommends itself to us in the form of wisdom, and sets every thing, but our own dear selves, at an immeasurable distance from our esteem and confidence. Consequently, he is known almost as soon as seen; and having nothing in his heart, that makes it necessary for him to keep it barred and bolted, opens it to the perusal even of a stranger. The father is a clergyman; and the son is designed for orders. The design however is quite his own, proceeding merely from his being, and having always been, sincere in his belief, and love, of the Gospel. Another acquaintance, I have lately made, is with a Mr. Nicholson, a north-country divine; very poor, but very good, and very happy. He reads prayers here twice a-day, all the year round; and travels on foot to serve two churches every Sunday through the year, his journey out and home again being sixteen miles. I supped with him last night. He gave me bread and cheese; and a black jug of ale of his own brewing, and

doubtless brewed by his own hands. Another of my acquaintance is Mr. —, a thin, tall, old man, and as good as he is thin. Being both early risers, and the only early walkers in the place, we soon became acquainted. His great piety can be equalled by nothing, but his great regularity ; for he is the most exact time-piece in the world. I have received a visit likewise from Mr. ———. He is very much a gentleman, well-read, and sensible. I am persuaded in short, that if I had had the choice of all England, where to fix my abode, I could not have chosen better for myself ; and most likely, I should not have chosen so well.

You say, you hope it is not necessary for salvation to undergo the afflictions, that I have undergone. No ! my dear cousin, God deals with his children, as a merciful father ; he does not, as he himself tells us, afflict willingly the sons of men. Doubtless there are many, who having been placed, by his good providence, out of the reach of any great evil, and the influence of bad example, have, from their very infancy, been partakers of the grace of his holy Spirit, in such a manner, as never to have allowed themselves in any grievous offence against him.—May you love him more and more, day by day, as every day, while you think upon him, you will find him more worthy of your love ; and may you be finally accepted by him, for His sake, whose intercession for all his faithful servants cannot but prevail !

Yours ever,

William Cowper.

LETTER VIII.

To lady Hesketh.

Huntingdon, Oct. 10, 1765.

My dear cousin,

I should grumble at your long silence, if I did not know, that one may love one's friends very well, though one is not always in a humour to write to them. Besides, I have the satisfaction of being perfectly sure, that you have, at least twenty times, recollected the debt you owe me, and as frequently resolved to pay it: and perhaps, while you remain indebted to me, you think of me twice as often as you would do, if the account were clear. These are the reflections, with which I comfort myself under the affliction of not hearing from you: my temper does not incline me to jealousy; and if it did, I should set all right by having recourse to what I have already received from you.

I thank God for your friendship, and for every friend I have: for all the pleasing circumstances here, for my health of body, and perfect serenity of mind. To recollect the past, and compare it with the present, is all I have need of, to fill me with gratitude; and to be grateful, is to be happy. Not that I think myself sufficiently thankful, or that I ever shall be so in this life. The warmest heart perhaps only feels by fits, and is often as insensible as the coldest. This at least is frequently the case with mine. But the Mercy that can forgive iniquity, will never be severe to mark our frailties. To that Mercy, my dear cousin, I commend you, with earnest wishes for your welfare; and I remain your ever affectionate,

William Cowper.

LETTER IX.

To lady Hesketh.

Huntingdon, Oct. 18, 1765.

I wish you joy, my dear cousin, of being safely arrived in port from the storms of Southampton. For my own part, who am but as a Thames-wherry, in a world full of tempest and commotion, I know so well the value of the creek I have put into, and the snugness it affords me, that I have a sensible sympathy with you in the pleasure you find, in being once more blown to Droxford. I know enough of miss Morley to send her my compliments ; to which, if I had never seen her, her affection for you would sufficiently entitle her. If I neglected to do it sooner, it is only because I am naturally apt to neglect what I ought to do : and if I were as genteel as I am negligent, I should be the most delightful creature in the universe.

I am glad you think so favourably of my Huntingdon acquaintance : they are indeed a nice set of folks ; and they suit me exactly. I should have been more particular in my account of miss Unwin, if I had had materials for a minute description. She is about eighteen years of age, rather handsome and genteel. In her mother's company she says little ; not because her mother requires it of her, but because she seems glad of that excuse for not talking ; being rather inclined to bashfulness. There is the most remarkable cordiality between all the parts of the family ; and the mother and daughter seem to doat upon each other. The first time I went to the house, I was introduced to the daughter alone ; and I sat with her near half an hour, before her brother came in, who had appointed me to call upon him. Talking is necessary in a *tête-à-tête*, to

distinguish the persons of the drama, from the chairs they sit on: accordingly she talked a great deal, and extremely well; and, like the rest of the family, behaved with as much ease, as if we had been old acquaintances. She resembles her mother in her great piety; who is one of the most remarkable instances of it, I have ever seen. They are altogether the cheerfullest and most engaging family-piece, it is possible to conceive.

Since I wrote the above, I met Mrs. Unwin in the street, and went home with her. She and I walked together near two hours in the garden; and we had a conversation, which did me more good than I should have received from an audience of the first prince in Europe. That woman is a blessing to me; and I never see her without being the better for her company. I am treated in the family, as if I were a near relation; and I have been repeatedly invited to call upon them at all times. You know what a shy fellow I am: I cannot prevail with myself to make so much use of this privilege, as I am sure they intend I should; but perhaps this awkwardness will wear off hereafter. It was my earnest request, before I left St. Alban's, that wherever it might please Providence to dispose of me, I might meet with such an acquaintance, as I find in Mrs. Unwin. How happy it is to believe with a steadfast assurance, that our petitions are heard, even while we are making them; and how delightful to meet with a proof of it in the effectual and actual grant of them! Surely, it is a gracious finishing given to those means, which the Almighty has been pleased to make use of, for my conversion. After having been deservedly rendered unfit for any society, to be again qualified for it, and admitted at once into the fellowship of those,

whom God regards as the excellent of the earth, and whom, in the emphatical language of Scripture, he preserves as the apple of his eye, is a blessing, which carries with it the stamp and visible superscription of Divine bounty: a grace unlimited as undeserved; and, like its glorious Author, free in its course, and blessed in its operation!

My dear cousin! health and happiness, and, above all, the favour of our great and gracious Lord, attend you! While we seek his favour, in spirit and in truth, we are infinitely more secure of it, than of the next breath we expect to draw. Heaven and earth have their destined periods; ten thousand worlds will vanish at the consummation of all things: but the Word of God stands fast; and they, who trust in him, shall never be confounded.

My love to all who inquire after me.

Yours affectionately,

William Cowper.

LETTER X.

To Joseph Hill, esq.

Huntingdon, Oct. 25, 1765.

Dear Joe,

I am afraid the month of October has proved rather unfavourable to the "belle assemblée" at Southampton; high winds and continual rains being bitter enemies to that agreeable lounge, of which you and I are equally fond. I have very cordially betaken myself to my books, and my fire-side; and I seldom leave them unless merely for exercise. I have added another family to the number of those I was acquainted with, when you were here. Their name is Unwin: the most agreeable people imaginable; quite sociable, and as free from the ceremonious civility of country gentlefolks, as any I ever knew. They treat me more

like a near relation than a stranger, and their house is always open to me. The old gentleman carries me to Cambridge in his chaise. He is a man of learning and good sense, and of great simplicity. His wife has a very uncommon understanding; she has read much, to excellent purpose; and she is more polite than a dutchess. The son, who belongs to Cambridge, is a most amiable young man; and the daughter is quite of a piece with the rest of the family. They see but little company, which suits me exactly. Go when I will, I find a house full of peace and cordiality in all its parts; and I am sure to hear no scandal, but such discourse instead of it, as we are all the better for. You remember Rousseau's description of an English morning; such are the mornings I spend with these good people: and the evenings differ from them in nothing, except that they are still more snug and quiet. Now I know them, I wonder that I liked Huntingdon so well before I knew them; and I am apt to think, I should find every place disagreeable, that had not an Unwin belonging to it.

This incident convinces me of the truth of an observation I have often made, that when we circumscribe our estimate of all that is clever within the limits of our own acquaintance, (which I at least have been always apt to do,) we are guilty of a very uncharitable censure upon the rest of the world, and of a narrowness of thinking disgraceful to ourselves. You remember Mr. Gray's stanza.

“Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The deep, unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its fragrance on the desert air.”

Yours, dear Joe,

William Cowper.

LETTER XI.

To lady Hesketh.

Huntingdon, March 6, 1766.

My dear cousin,

I have for some time past imputed your silence to the cause, which you yourself assign for it, viz. to my change of situation; and I was even sagacious enough to account for the frequency of your letters to me, while I lived alone, from your attention to me in a state of such solitude as seemed to make it an act of particular charity to write to me. I bless God, I was happy even then. Solitude has nothing gloomy in it, if the soul points upwards. St. Paul tells his Hebrew converts, "Ye are come" (already come) "to Mount Sion: to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly of the first-born, which are written in Heaven; and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant." When this is the case, as surely it was with them, or the Spirit of Truth had never spoken it, there is an end of the melancholy and dullness of life. You will not suspect me, my dear cousin, of a design to understand this passage literally. But this, however, it certainly means; that a lively faith is able to anticipate, in some measure, the joys of that heavenly society, which the soul shall actually possess hereafter.

Since I have changed my situation, I have found still greater cause of thanksgiving to the Father of all mercies. The family with whom I live, are Christians: and, I believe, the Almighty has been pleased to bring me to the knowledge of them, that I may want no means of improvement in that temper and conduct, which he requires in all his servants.

My dear cousin! one half of the Christian world would call this madness, fanaticism, and folly: but are not these things warranted by the Word of God, not only in the passage I have cited, but in many others? If we have no communion with God here, surely we can expect none hereafter. A faith that does not place our conversation in heaven; that does not warm the heart, and purify it too; that does not, in short, govern our thought, word, and deed; will not obtain for us any spiritual blessing, here or hereafter. Let us see therefore, my dear cousin, that we do not deceive ourselves in a matter of infinite moment. The world will be ever telling us, that we are good enough; and the world will vilify us behind our backs. But it is not the world, which tries the heart; that is the prerogative of God alone.—My dear cousin! I have often prayed for you behind your back, and now I pray for you to your face. I have known you so long, and so well, that I am not afraid of telling you that I sincerely wish for your growth in every Christian grace; in every thing that may promote and secure your everlasting welfare.

I am obliged to Mrs. Cowper for the book; which arrived safe. I am willing to consider it as an intimation on her part, that she would wish me to write to her; and I shall do it accordingly. My circumstances are rather particular; they call upon my friends, those, I mean, who are truly such, to take some little notice of me; and they will naturally make those, who are not such in sincerity, rather shy of doing it. To this I impute the silence of many with regard to me, who, before the affliction that befell me, were ready enough to converse with me.

Yours ever,

William Cowper.

LETTER XII.

To Mrs. Cowper, of Park-house, near Hertford.

Huntingdon, March 11, 1766.

My dear cousin,

I am much obliged to you for sending me Pearsall's Meditations; especially as it furnishes me with an occasion of writing to you. My friends must excuse me, if I write to none but those, who lay it fairly in my way to do so: the inference I am apt to draw from their silence, is, that they wish me to be silent too.

I have great reason, my dear cousin, to be thankful to the gracious Providence, that conducted me to this place. The lady, in whose house I live, is so excellent a person, and regards me with a friendship so truly Christian, that I could almost fancy my own mother restored to life again, to compensate to me for all the friends whom I have lost, and all the connexions that are broken. She has a son at Cambridge, who is in all respects worthy of such a mother; and is the most amiable young man I ever knew. His natural and acquired endowments are very considerable; and as to his virtues, I need only say that he is a Christian. It ought to be a matter of daily thanksgiving to me, that I am admitted into the society of such persons; and I pray God to make me, and keep me, worthy of them.

Your brother Martin has been very kind to me; having written to me twice, in a style, which, though it once was, to say the least, irksome to me, I now know how to value. I pray God to forgive me the many light things I have both said and thought of him and his labours. Henceforth, I shall consider him as a burning and a shining light; and as one of those who

having turned many to righteousness, shall shine hereafter as the stars for ever and ever.

So much for the state of my heart. As to my spirits, I am cheerful and happy; and having peace with God, have peace within myself. For the continuance of this blessing, I trust to Him who gives it; and they who trust in Him shall never be confounded.

Yours affectionately,

William Cowper.

LETTER XIII.

To Mrs. Cowper.

April 4, 1766.

My dear cousin,

I agree with you that letters are not essential to friendship; but they seem to be a natural fruit of it, when they are the only intercourse that can be had. And a friendship producing no sensible effects is so like indifference, that the appearance may easily deceive even an acute discerner. I retract, however, all that I said upon this subject in my last letter, having reason to suspect that it proceeded from a principle which I would discourage in myself upon all occasions, even a pride that felt itself hurt upon a mere suspicion of neglect. I have so much cause for humility, and so much need of it too, and every little sneaking resentment is such an enemy to it, that I hope I shall never again give quarter to any thing that appears in the shape of sullenness or self-consequence. Alas! if my best Friend, who laid down his life for me, were to remember all the instances, in which I have neglected him, and to plead them against me in judgment, where should I hide my guilty head in the day of recompense? I will pray, therefore, for blessings upon those who

cease to be my friends; and upon those, who continue to be my enemies.

I know well that I passed upon my friends for a person at least religiously inclined, if not actually religious, and, what is more wonderful, I thought myself a Christian, when I had no faith in Christ; when I saw no beauty in him; in short, when I had neither love, nor any Christian grace whatever, but a thousand seeds of rebellion springing up in enmity against him. But, blessed be God, even the God who is become my salvation! the hail of affliction and rebuke for sin, has swept away the refuge of lies. It pleased the Almighty, in great mercy, to set all my misdeeds before me. At length, the storm being past, a quiet and peaceful serenity of soul succeeded; such as ever attends the gift of lively faith in the all-sufficient atonement, and the sweet sense of mercy and pardon purchased by the blood of Christ. Thus did he break me, and bind me up; thus did he wound me, and his hands made me whole. My dear cousin, I make no apology for entertaining you with the history of my conversion, because I know you to be a Christian in the sterling import of the appellation. This is, however, but a very summary account of the matter; neither would a letter contain the astonishing particulars. If we ever meet again in this world, I will relate them to you by word of mouth. In the next world, I doubt not I shall remember and record them with a gratitude better suited to the subject.

Yours, my dear cousin, affectionately,

William Cowper.

LETTER XIV.

To Joseph Hill, esq.

July 16, 1767.

Dear Joe,

Your wishes that the news-paper may have misinformed you, are vain. Mr. Unwin is dead, and he died in the manner there mentioned. At nine o'clock, on Sunday morning, he was in perfect health, and as likely to live twenty years as either of us; and before ten he was stretched, speechless and senseless, upon a flock bed, in a poor cottage, where (it being impossible to remove him) he died on Thursday evening*. I heard his dying groans, the effect of great agony; for he was a strong man, and he was much convulsed in his last moments. The few short intervals of sense, that were indulged him, he spent in earnest prayer, and in expressions of a firm trust and confidence in the only Saviour. To that strong hold we must all resort at last, if we would have hope in our death. When every other refuge fails, we are glad to fly to the only shelter, to which we can repair to any purpose; and happy is it for us, when the false ground that we have chosen for ourselves, being broken under us, we have recourse to the Rock, which can never be shaken!

Our society will not break up: but we shall settle in some other place; where, is at present uncertain.

Yours,

William Cowper.

* He was thrown from his horse, as he was going to church on Sunday morning, and received a dreadful fracture on the back part of his skull.

LETTER XV.

To Mrs. Cowper.

My dear cousin,

I have not been behind hand in reproaching myself with neglect; but I desire to take shame to myself for my unprofitableness in this, as well as in every other respect. I take the next immediate opportunity however of thanking you for your letter, and of assuring you, that instead of being surprised at your silence, I rather wonder that you, or any of my friends, have any room left in your memories, for so careless and negligent a correspondent. I am obliged to you for the intelligence you send me of my kindred; and I rejoice to hear of their welfare. He who settles the bounds of our habitations, has at length cast our lot at a great distance from each other; but I do not therefore forget their former kindness to me, or cease to be interested in their well being.

You live in the centre of a world, in which I know you do not delight. Happy are you, my dear friend, in being able to discern the insufficiency of all it can afford, to fill and satisfy the desires of an immortal soul! That God, who created us for the enjoyment of himself, has determined in mercy that it shall fail us here, in order that the blessed result of all our inquiries after happiness in the creature, may be a warm pursuit of, and a close attachment to, our true interests, in fellowship and communion with Him, through the name and mediation of a dear Redeemer. I bless his goodness, and grace, that I have any reason to hope I am a partaker, with you, in the desire after better things, than are to be found in a world polluted with sin, and therefore devoted to destruction. May He

enable us both to consider our present life in its only true light, as an opportunity put into our hands to glorify him amongst men, by a conduct suited to his Word and Will! I am miserably defective in this holy and blessed art: but I hope there is at the bottom of all my sinful infirmities, a sincere desire to live just so long as I may be enabled, in some poor measure, to answer the end of my existence in this respect; and then to obey the summons, and attend him in a world, where they who are his servants here, shall pay him an unsinful obedience for ever.

Your dear mother is too good to me, and puts a more charitable construction upon my silence than the fact will warrant. I am not better employed than I should be in corresponding with her. I have that within, which hinders me wretchedly, in every thing that I ought to do, but is prone to trifle, and let time, and every good thing, run to waste. I hope, however, to write to her soon.

My love, and best wishes, attend Mr. Cowper, and all who inquire after me. May God be with you, to bless you, and do you good, by all his dispensations! Do not forget me when you are speaking to our best Friend, before his Mercy-seat.

Yours ever,

William Cowper.

LETTER XVI.

To Mrs. Cowper.

Olney, Aug. 31, 1769.

My dear cousin,

A letter from your brother Frederic brought me yesterday the most afflicting intelligence, that has reached me these many years. I pray to God to comfort you; and to enable you to sustain this

heavy stroke with that resignation to his will, which none but himself can give, and which he gives to none but his own children. How blessed and happy is your lot, my dear friend, beyond the common lot of the greater part of mankind ; that you know what it is to draw near to God in prayer, and are acquainted with a throne of Grace ! You have resources in the infinite love of a Redeemer, which are withheld from millions : and the promises of God, are sufficient to answer all your necessities, and to sweeten the bitterest cup, which your heavenly Father will ever put into your hand. May He now give you liberty to drink at these wells of salvation, till you are filled with consolation and peace, in the midst of trouble ! He has said ; “ When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee ; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee : when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned ; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.” You have need of such a Word as this ; and he knows your need of it : and it is in the time of necessity, that he will be sure to appear in behalf of those, who trust in him.

I bear you and yours upon my heart before him, night and day ; for I never expect to hear of distress, which shall call upon me with a louder voice, to pray for the sufferer. I know that the Lord hears me for myself, vile and sinful as I am ; and I believe, and I am sure, that he will hear me for you also. He is the Friend of the widow, and the Father of the fatherless, even God in his holy habitation : in all our afflictions he is afflicted ; and he chastens us in mercy. Surely, he will sanctify this dispensation to you ; do you great and everlasting good by it ; make the world appear like dust and vanity, in your sight, as it truly is ; and

open to your view the glories of a better country, where there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor pain, but God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes for ever.—O that comfortable word! “I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction:” so that our very sorrows are evidences of our calling; and he chastens us, because we are his children.

My dear cousin, I commit you to the Word of his grace, and to the comforts of his holy Spirit. Your life is needful for your family: may God, in mercy to them, prolong it; and may he preserve you from the dangerous effects which a stroke like this, might have upon a frame so tender as yours! I grieve with you; I pray for you; could I do more, I would; but God must comfort you.

Yours, &c.

William Cowper.

LETTER XVII.

To the rev. William Unwin.

March 28, 1780.

My dear friend,

I have heard nothing more from Mr Newton, on the subject you mention; but, I dare say, that, having been given to expect the benefit of your nomination, on behalf of his nephew, he still depends upon it. His obligations to Mr. —, have been so numerous, and so weighty, that, though he has, in a few instances, prevailed upon himself to recommend an object now and then to his patronage, he has very sparingly, if at all, exerted his interest with him in behalf of his own relations.

With respect to the advice, you are required to give to a young lady, that she may be properly in-

structed in the manner of keeping the sabbath, I just subjoin a few hints, that have occurred to me on the occasion ; not because I think you want them, but because it would seem unkind to withhold them. The sabbath then, I think, may be considered, first, as a commandment, not less binding on modern Christians than on ancient Jews. The spiritual people amongst the latter, did not think it enough to abstain from manual occupations on that day ; but, entering more deeply into the meaning of the precept, allotted those hours they took from the world, to the cultivation of holiness in their own souls : which ever was, and ever will be, a duty incumbent on all, who ever heard of a sabbath ; and is of perpetual obligation both on Jews and Christians. The commandment enjoins it ; the prophets have also enforced it : and, in many instances, both scriptural and modern, the breach of it has been punished with a providential and judicial severity, that may make by-standers tremble. Secondly, the sabbath may be considered as a privilege, which you well know how to dilate upon, better than I can tell you ; thirdly, as a sign of that covenant, by which believers are entitled to a rest, that yet remaineth ; fourthly, as the *sine-quâ-non* of the Christian character. And on the last head, I should guard against being understood to mean no more than two attendances on public worship ; which is a form, complied with by thousands, who never kept a sabbath in their lives. Consistence is necessary, to give substance and solidity to the whole. To sanctify the day at church, and to trifle it away out of church, is profanation, and vitiates all.—I would ask my catechumen one short question. Do you love the day, or do you not ? If you love it, you will never inquire, how far

you may safely deprive yourself of the enjoyment of it. If you find yourself obliged in conscience to acknowledge, that you do not love it, this is an alarming symptom ; and it ought to make you tremble. If you do not love it, then it is a weariness to you, and you wish it were over. The ideas of labour, and rest, are not more opposite to each other, than the idea of a sabbath, and that dislike and disgust, with which it fills the souls of thousands, to be obliged to keep it.

Yours, &c.

William Cowper.

LETTER XVIII.

To the rev. John Newton.

May 3, 1780.

Dear sir,

You indulge in such a variety of subjects, and allow me so much latitude of excursion in this scribbling employment, that I have no excuse for silence. I deal much in ink indeed, but not such ink as is employed by poets, and writers of essays. Mine is a harmless fluid, and guilty of no deceptions, but such as may prevail, without the least injury. I draw mountains, valleys, woods, streams, &c. I admire them myself, and Mrs. Unwin admires them ; and her praise, and my praise put together, are fame enough for me.

I delight in bawbles, and I know them to be such ; for rested in, and viewed, without a reference to their Author, what is the earth, what are the planets, what is the sun itself, but a bawble ? Better is it for a man never to have seen them, or to see them with the eyes of a brute, stupid and unconscious of what he beholds, than not to be able to say : " The Maker of all these wonders is my friend !" Some men think a fine estate, a large conservatory, a hot-house rich as a West-Indian

garden, things of consequence ; visit them with pleasure ; and muse upon them with ten times more. I am pleased with a frame of four lights, doubtful whether the few pines which it contains, will ever be worth a farthing ; amuse myself with a green-house, which lord Bute's gardener could take upon his back, and walk away with ; and when I have paid it the accustomed visit, and watered it, and given it air, I say to myself : " This is not mine ; it is a plaything lent me for the present ; I must leave it soon."

Yours, my dear friend,

William Cowper.

LETTER XIX.

To Mrs. Cowper.

Aug. 31, 1780.

My dear cousin,

I am obliged to you for your long letter, which did not seem so ; and for your short one, which was more than I had any reason to expect. Short as it was, it conveyed to me two interesting articles of intelligence. An account of your recovering from a fever, and of Lady Cowper's death. The latter was, I suppose, to be expected ; for by what remembrance I have of her ladyship, she had reached those years, that are always found upon the borders of another world. As for you, your time of life is comparatively of a youthful date. You may think of death as much as you please ; (you can scarcely think of it too much ;) but I hope you will live to think of it many years.

It costs me not much difficulty to suppose, that my friends who were already grown old, when I saw them last, are old still ; but it costs me a good deal sometimes, to think of those, who were at that time young,

as being older than they were. Not having been an eye-witness of the change, that time has made in them, and my former idea of them not being corrected by observation, it remains the same ; my memory presents me with this image unimpaired, and while it retains the resemblance of what they were, forgets that, by this time, the picture may have lost much of its likeness, through the alteration, that succeeding years have made in the original. I know not what impressions Time may have made upon your person, for while his claws strike deep furrows in some faces, he seems to sheath them with much tenderness, as if fearful of doing injury, to others. But though an enemy to the person, he is a friend to the mind ; and you have found him so : yet, even in this respect, his treatment of us depends upon what he meets with at our hands. If we use him well, and listen to his admonitions, he is a friend indeed ; but otherwise he is the worst of enemies, who takes from us daily something that we valued, and gives us nothing better in its stead. It is well with them, who, like you, can stand a tip-toe on the mountain top of human life ; look down with pleasure upon the valley which they have passed ; and sometimes stretch their wings in joyful hope of a happy flight into eternity. Yet a little while, and your hope will be accomplished.

When you can without inconvenience, favour me with a little account of your own family, I shall be glad to receive it ; for, though separated from my kindred by scarcely more than half a century of miles, I know as little of their concerns, as if oceans and continents were interposed between us.

Yours, my dear cousin,

William Cowper.

LETTER XX.

To Mrs. Cowper.

Oct. 19, 1781.

My dear cousin,

It is long since I received your last letter ; and yet I believe I can say truly that not a post has gone by since the receipt of it, that has not reminded me of the debt I owe you, for your obliging and unreserved communications both in prose and verse ; especially for the latter, because I consider them as marks of your peculiar confidence. The truth is, I have been such a verse maker myself, and so busy in preparing a volume for the press, which I imagine will make its appearance in the course of the winter, that I hardly had leisure to listen to the calls of any other engagement. It is however finished ; and I have nothing now to do with it, but to consign it over to the judgment of the public.

When so many writers of the greatest abilities have gone before, who seem to have anticipated every valuable subject, as well as all the graces of poetical embellishment, it is a bold undertaking to step forth into the world in the character of a bard ; especially when it is considered that luxury, idleness, and vice, have debauched the public taste, and that scarcely any thing is welcome, but childish fiction, or what has, at least, a tendency to excite a laugh. I thought, however, that I had stumbled upon some subjects that had never before been poetically treated ; and upon some others, to which I imagined it would not be difficult to give an air of novelty, by the manner of treating them. My sole drift is to be useful : a point, which I knew, I should in vain aim at, unless I could be likewise entertaining. I have therefore fixed these two strings upon my bow ; and, by the help of both, I have done my best to send my arrow to the mark.

My readers will hardly have begun to laugh, before they will be called upon to correct that levity, and peruse me with a more serious air. As to the effect, I leave it in His hands who can alone produce it: neither prose nor verse can reform the manners of a dissolute age, much less can they inspire a sense of religious obligation, unless assisted, and made efficacious, by the Power who superintends the truth, which he has vouchsafed to impart.

You made my heart ache with sympathetic sorrow, when you described the state of your mind on occasion of your late visit into Hertfordshire. Had I been informed of your journey before you made it, I should have foretold all your feelings with unerring certainty of prediction. You will never cease to feel upon that subject; but with your principles of resignation, and of acquiescence in the Divine will, you will always feel as becomes a Christian. We are forbidden to murmur, but we are not forbidden to regret; and them whom we loved tenderly while living, we may still pursue with an affectionate remembrance, without having any occasion to charge ourselves with rebellion against the Sovereignty that appointed a separation. A day is coming, when I am confident, you will see and know, that mercy to both parties was the principal agent in a scene, the recollection of which is still painful.

Yours, my dear cousin,

William Cowper.

LETTER XXI.

To Joseph Hill, esq.

November, 1784.

My dear friend,

To condole with you, on the death of a mother aged eighty seven would be absurd: rather,

therefore, as is reasonable, I congratulate you, on the almost singular felicity of having so long enjoyed the company of so amiable, and so near a relation. Your lot and mine, in this respect, have been very different ; as, indeed, in almost every other. Your mother lived to see you rise, at least to see you comfortably established, in the world ; mine, dying when I was six years old, did not live to see me sink in it. You may remember with pleasure while you live, a blessing vouchsafed to you so long ; and I, while I live, must regret a comfort, of which I was deprived so early. I can truly say, that not a week passes, (perhaps I might with equal veracity say a day,) in which I do not think of her : such was the impression which her tenderness made upon me, though the opportunity she had for showing it was so short. But the ways of God are equal : and when I reflect on the pangs which she would have suffered had she been a witness of all mine, I see more cause to rejoice, than to mourn, that she was hidden in the grave so soon.

We have, as you say, lost a lively and sensible neighbour in lady Austen : but we have been long accustomed to a state of retirement, within one degree of solitude ; and being naturally lovers of still life, we can relapse into our former duality, without being unhappy at the change. To me, indeed, a third is not necessary, while I can have the companion I have had these twenty years.

A volume of mine will greet you, some time either in the course of the winter, or early in the spring. You will find it perhaps, on the whole, more entertaining than the former ; as, it treats on a greater variety of subjects, and those, at least for the most part, of a sublunary kind. It will consist of a poem in six

books, called the Task. To which will be added another, which I finished yesterday, called, I believe, *Tirocinium*, on the subject of education.

You perceive that I have taken your advice, and given the pen no rest.

Yours,

William Cowper.

LETTER XXII.

To lady Hesketh.

The Lodge, Dec. 4, 1786.

I sent you, my dear, a melancholy letter, and I do not know that I shall now send you one very unlike it. Not that any thing occurs in consequence of our late loss more afflictive than was to be expected; but the mind does not perfectly recover its tone after a shock like that which we felt so lately.

My experience has long taught me, that this world is a world of shadows; and that it is the more prudent, as well as the more Christian course, to possess the comforts which we find in it, as if we possessed them not: but it is no easy matter to reduce this doctrine into practice. We forget that the God who gave them, may, when he pleases, take them away; and that perhaps it may please him to take them, at a time when we least expect, or are least disposed, to part from them. Thus it has happened in the present case. There never was a moment in Unwin's life, when there seemed to be more urgent want of him, than the moment in which he died. He had attained to an age, when, (if they are at any time useful,) men become most useful to their families, their friends, and the world. His parish began to feel, and to be sen-

sible of, the advantages of his ministry. The clergy around him, were many of them awed by his example. His children were thriving under his own tuition and management : and his eldest boy is likely to feel his loss severely, being by his years, in some respect, qualified to understand the value of such a parent ; by his literary proficiency, too clever for a school-boy, and too young at the same time for the university. The removal of a man in the prime of life, of such a character, and with such connexions, appears to make a void in society that can never be filled. God seemed to have made him just what he was, that he might be a blessing to others ; and when the influence of his character and abilities began to be felt, removed him. These are mysteries, my dear, that we cannot contemplate without astonishment : but they will be explained hereafter ; and they must, in the mean time, be revered in silence. It is well for his mother that she has spent her life in the practice of an habitual acquiescence in the dispensations of Providence ; else, I know that this stroke would have been heavier, after all that she has suffered, than she could have borne. She derives, as she well may, great consolation from the thought that he lived the life, and died the death, of a Christian. The consequence is, if possible, more unavoidable than the most mathematical conclusion, that, therefore, he is happy. So farewell, my friend Unwin ! the first man for whom I conceived a friendship after my removal from St. Alban's ; and for whom I cannot but still continue to feel a friendship, though I shall see thee with these eyes no more !

Yours, &c.

William Cowper.

CHAPTER XIV.

LETTERS OF MISS SEWARD.

LETTER I.

To miss Emma —.

Lichfield, June 2, 1764.

O! my kind friend, my dear sister * is dangerously ill! Thursday next was fixed for her marriage. About three o'clock yesterday morning, I was awakened by her taking my hand, and telling me that she was very ill. Her dear hands felt of a parching heat, and so did her forehead and temples.

I called assistance instantly. We are all very much alarmed. Medicine has hitherto unsuccessfully contended with the disease, which I am afraid gains ground instead of abating. Her spirits have been too much hurried for a constitution so delicate.

We are a sad family; distracted with fears, that we dare not communicate to each other. I will not, while any hope remains, send away this letter; that, if it please Heaven to restore the dear sufferer, you may be spared those grievous apprehensions which your sympathy will excite, should you know our situation before. you are informed that its terrors are removed.

Thursday morning.—Congratulate me, dearest Emma!

* Her only sister, miss Sarah Seward, who died at the age of nineteen, on the eve of her intended marriage with Mr. Porter, a merchant at Leghorn, brother of Mrs. Lucy Porter of Lichfield, and son-in-law of Dr. Johnson.

The intended bridal day has arisen auspiciously, averting from my Sally's bosom the arrows of death, whose aim has been deprecated with our prayers and tears. There is a remission in the fever ;—a balmy moisture upon her temples, bosom, and hands. She breathes freely ; is able to sit up in an arm chair ; to smile with her wonted serenity ; and cheerfully to tell us that she shall soon be well.

Thursday night.—Oh ! my friend, our hopes are vanished !—While I was changing my gown, and preparing to carry neatness and a cheerful countenance to my sister's arm chair, she relapsed ;—the fever returned with redoubled violence !

In the distraction with which the servants fled different ways to recall the medical people, nobody came near my apartment to reveal the sad tidings, and I entered the sick room with all the alacrity of hope. What did I behold there !—Alas ! my precious sister sunk back in her bed, just recovering from a fainting-fit !—sweet Honora * supporting with her arm the dear sufferer's head, her silent tears falling, in large drops, upon her Sally's pillow ; my father and mother standing by the bed-side, the deepest wo in their countenance ; Mr. Porter sitting in the window, leaning upon his hand, which covered his forehead.

The dear creature opened her languid eyes, and, looking at me earnestly, said : “ My Nancy, you are dressed !—are you going out ?—Do not leave me long.” —“ Alas, no ! I had no thought of going out. I left you, my love, to put on clean clothes, that I might look comfortable to you, flattering myself that you were

* Miss Honora Sneyd, daughter of Edward Sneyd, esq. She was adopted by Mr. and Mrs Seward, and educated in their family. She married Richard Lovell Edgeworth, esq.

greatly better: nobody came to tell me that you were not so well again."—She sighed, and waved her dear hand emphatically, as if she had said: "The days of our happiness here are passed away!"

Saturday morning.—Ah! she has grown worse and worse, though by slow degrees. Dr. D. says, when the fever returned, it was with a fatal change in its nature, from inflammatory to putrid, and that he has very little hope of saving her.

How pitiable would Mr. Porter's situation be, if he had strong sensibilities!—so near calling such a blessing his, and to have it thus torn from him! but his sensations seem more like vexation than grief.

My father's sanguine and cheerful disposition will not suffer him to think that his darling is so ill as she surely is. My mother, my poor mother!—She has heard that a clergyman in Worcestershire, of the name of Bayley, has frequently administered James's Powders with success, in very dangerous cases. She has just sent a chaise and four full speed, to conjure him to come hither in it, on an errand of life or death. We have all eagerly caught at this possibility; and we are flattering ourselves with hopes, which, I fear, are but as the straws at which drowning wretches catch.

Sunday.—Mr. Bayley is come; he arrived at ten this morning. The instant he came into the room, my mother rushed to him, and clasped her arms wildly around him, exclaiming, in the piercing accent of anguish: "Save my child!" He burst into tears. They went instantly into the sick chamber: but O! he gives us not more hope than Dr. D. If the fever had but continued inflammatory!—but here all evacuation is pernicious. He joins the doctor in advising musk medicines instead of the powders. Adieu!

Wednesday morning.—I have hardly strength to tell you—it is pronounced, she cannot survive this night!—Pray for us that we may be supported under this severe chastisement of Almighty Power!

Anna Seward.

LETTER II.

To miss Emma —.

Gotham, Nottinghamshire, June 23, 1764.

I have sat almost an hour at the writing-table, my hands crossed upon this paper, unable to take up the pen; that pen which I used to seize with glad alacrity, when it was to convey my thoughts to you! Now, spiritless, afflicted, weary, my mind presents only scenes of mournful recollection; or, hovering over the silent and untimely grave of my sister, perceives nothing but a drear vacuity.

Your last letter came to me when my heart laboured under one of the keenest paroxysms of its late anguish. The funeral bell was tolling; and the dear remains were everlastingly passing away from our habitation. Six of her young companions, clad in white raiment, the emblem of her purity, and drowned in tears, bore, with trembling hands, the pall that covered the dim form, which, but a little fortnight before, had walked amidst them with the light step of youth and gaiety; upon the very lawn over which they were then slowly walking, in grieved and awful silence, interrupted only by the solemn death-bell.

Thus vanish our hopes!—thus cold is the bridal bed of my dear sister! No sun-beam shall pierce its dark recess, “till the last morn appear.”

A few days after this sad scene was closed, we came hither, to the village retirement of my excellent uncle

and aunt, Martin. Pious tranquillity broods over the kind and hospitable mansion; and the balms of sympathy, and the cordials of devotion, are here poured into our torn hearts.

At times, I can scarcely persuade myself that I shall see her no more!—Upon that tender, instinctive affection, which grew with our growth, were engrafted esteem the most established, and confidence the most entire. One bed!—one heart!—one soul!—Even the difference of our dispositions became a cement to our friendship; her gentleness tempered my impetuosity; her natural composure caught animation from her sister's sprightliness;—"our studies, our amusements, our taste the same." O heavy, heavy loss! Yet bow thy stubborn grief, O my spirit! and remember the reason thou hadst to fear for her happiness in that union, from which she was so awfully snatched away.

Cut off, as she was, in the bloom of life, nobody could be more resigned. Sickness, pain, and extreme bodily weakness, had not power to extinguish, or even to abate, the pure flame of her devotion; yet all was calm and rational, for she had no delirium through the course of her illness. When her eyes were closed to open no more, when she seemed insensible to outward objects, she continued fervent in prayer, nay, in thanksgiving, to her God. She often repeated the Lord's prayer, and several verses out of the scriptures which were applicable to her expiring situation. In these repetitions, her voice, though low, and interrupted by the pausings of weakness, was distinct.

She expressed unwillingness to take the musk medicines: but when my father and mother solicited her, she opened her mouth and swallowed them, without showing any more reluctance.

Her partial affection for me was almost the latest yearning of her gentle spirit. As I sat by her weeping, on the morning of the final day, and saw her lie pale and stretched out, her sweet eyes unable to open, she said, in a low voice, when we had all thought her insensible to every earthly recollection: "Speak, my Nancy; let me once more hear that dear voice, ever welcome to me!"

O! how those words yet vibrate on my ear! I repeat them to myself many times every day and night, endeavouring to imitate the sweet, mournful accent in which they fell upon my soul with indelible impression.

My father was agonized by the loss of the darling of his heart; but it is amazing how soon the native cheerfulness of his temper has arisen from beneath the blow. My mother, at first, bore it better. She directed the funeral; and the business which it created seemed to have rendered her spirits collected, and to have dried the source of her tears: but, when that was over, a deep, severe dejection succeeded, which nothing seems of power to comfort or to cheer.

My cousin, miss Martin, is of my sister's age; and was deservedly beloved by her above all her other companions, next to myself and Honora. She grieves for our loss and her own with passionate tenderness.

Honora, young as she is, has shared all my sorrow. If she is but spared me, I shall not be quite bereaved; it will not be wholly in vain that I shall say, "Return blest days!"

Adieu!

Anna Seward.

LETTER III.

To miss Emma ———.

Lichfield, March 27, 1765.

With a sorrowing heart, and a trembling hand, I take up the pen to thank you, dearest Emma, for your kind though mournful letter of yesterday. It arrived a few hours after the fatal period of our beloved friend's indisposition; which, notwithstanding some foreboding fears arising at intervals in my mind, was apparently nothing more than a common cold and cough. Transient only were my apprehensions; and it is certain, that neither her father, nor any of her friends at Shrewsbury, had an idea of her being in danger, till within a few days of her setting out.—General Severn thought worse of her complaints than those who hourly beheld her, and persuaded the family she was in, to suffer him to take her with him to Bath, that her father, who was there, might carry her directly to Bristol. Alas! she lived not to reach its balmy springs! On alighting from the general's chaise at Bath, she fainted away in her father's arms; and, growing instantly too ill to be removed, died at three the ensuing morning.—Alas! that father! my heart bleeds for him. O! that he had taken her to Bristol when he went to Bath, a week or two after we all left London! But who could foresee the sad necessity? she made so light of her complaints! I had a letter from him yesterday. It is full upon the sad circumstances. Blotted with his tears, the writing is almost effaced by mine.

Alas! dear Emma, is it so soon come to this?—Little did I imagine that she, who so lately wept over my sister's bier, would, ere the year came round, press her own. But one year since, we beheld them both in the bloom of sprightly youth, gay and smiling, the delight of

all who beheld them. "But now the spoiler is fallen upon their summer fruits, and upon their vintage." No sighs, however, can recall them; no lamentation awake them from their deep, everlasting slumber. No! let us not say everlasting; for it ill becomes us, the heirs of immortal hope, to use that word, fit only for the lips of the cold, despairing materialist.

Emma! if it is indeed (as surely it is) given us, in the world of light and life, to know and love the companions of our mortal state, let us think of her whom we have recently lost, emerging at once from the dimness of a mortal decline, and from the bitterness of death,—a merciful God speaking pardon to all her frailties, and confirming her unalloyed and ever-during felicity! Let us imagine, amidst the bright angelic host, one gentle, beatified spirit hailing the new inhabitant of Heaven: imagine that she shall discover, amidst the encircling splendours of immortal beauty, the friend of her youth, the sweet companion of her innocent pleasures in this world; a world which had been to them, the few hours of preparatory sickness excepted, the pleasing, though faint dawn of being, now brightened into that day which shall bring no sorrow, and which shall know no night.

How selfish then our murmurs!—Yet who can stifle the sighs of nature? or, at once, disperse the gloom arising from the consciousness, that, through a perhaps long course of years, we shall not behold the beloved of our hearts?—Yet let us endeavour, by the solemn aids of reason and religion, to submit cheerfully to the doom which we cannot reverse; and, by the soft assistance of hope and tender imagination, to gild and irradiate even the dark mansions of the grave.

Another consolation remains to us from the early, and, apparently, premature death of those we love. Obser-

vation has already taught me, that youth, amidst all its rash hopes and giddy indiscretions, is, in general, more amiable than middle or advanced life.

“The world’s infectious ; few bring back, at eve,
Immaculate, the manners of the morn.”

Quitting this mournful subject, let me observe, that scarcely any thing, except our mutual loss pressing forward to my pen, could thus long have prevented my expressing how welcome is the assurance you give me, that, as soon as these March winds are over, you will come to Lichfield, be our guest some weeks, and remain with your aunt in this city during the ensuing summer.

How delightful had this intelligence been, if ill health had not suggested the scheme, and if such tidings had arrived in cheerfuller hours ! Dearly are they consoling even in these. Whatever our sorrows, whatever our consolations, it is, at least, sweet to reflect, that we shall share them together, as the vernal day rolls on.

Adieu ! May I soon receive you in amended health and spirits ; for joy, or even cheerfulness, must, till that moment, be unknown to the heart of your friend,

Anna Seward.

LETTER IV.

*To miss Scott *.*

Lichfield, April 13, 1788.

Alas ! dear miss Scott, (for I must write to you once more ere you resign that name which I have

* Of this lady, miss Seward, in a letter to Mr. Hayley, (May 10, 1788,) speaks in the following terms : “Miss Scott has a serious and religious mind. Her filial piety has been exemplary. The bridegroom has waited for her, with Jacobean constancy, nearly twice seven years ; for she would not marry while her aged mother lived, whose wretched health demanded her watchful and unremitting cares. Last winter, sorrow and liberty came to her at once, from the grave of a beloved parent.”

long valued,) my heart sympathizes with you in the mournful sense of privation resulting from the total dissolution of the filial ties. Mine yet subsist; but it is by so attenuated a thread, that I live in hourly apprehension of shedding hopeless tears for the loss of one of the sweetest and most interesting satisfactions which the human bosom can feel.

I shall be glad to learn that a new situation, new cares, new duties, have combined to occupy your mind, and to leave it less leisure for unavailing regrets. I dare assure myself that Mr. Taylor will make you a kind husband. His fine understanding and strict piety are guarantees for your future peace. His temper had severe trials in the sacrifices you made of his happiness to the surely unreasonable opposition of a parent. Your health has doubtless suffered much from the conflicts you endured; and from their cessation, we may hope for a great amendment in that important source of comfort. The doubts you have felt and expressed for your happiness as a wife, increase my trust on that head. Disappointment is a prime source of the woes of wedlock. Dangerous are those partial hopes and dependences which frail mortality can so seldom fulfil.

No, dear miss Scott, I shall not be in London for a long time. There is no leaving my dearest father; and should I soon lose him, I could not quit Lichfield till I had settled my little household in a habitation better suited to my fortune and my singleness, which would be much out of their place in a palace. But never can any other home be dear to me as this. No local attachment can be more passionate than mine to these walls and bowers, that seem to wear the resemblance, and breathe the spirit, of all whom I have loved.

Adieu!

Anna Seward

LETTER V.

To miss Helen Maria Williams.

Lichfield, April 21, 1790.

Much and various is the kindness for which I have to thank you, my dear miss Williams: for your consoling sympathy; for the desire you express for our speedy meeting in town; and for your acceptable present.

It is true, that the existence of my father, whose death yet sits heavy on my heart, had been long destitute of all corporeal and intellectual energy: but it is a state of severe suffering alone, which, thank God, his was not, that can banish the yearning regrets of affection, for the loss of even the most faded and imperfect resemblance of what once was.

I am, however, most thankful, that the heart-dear gratifications of protecting, comforting, and caressing that desolated form, so long were mine; since the desolation, though almost total, was not to himself drear. Pain seldom visited his weak and torpid frame, and never his mind, during several past years; one period of about two years excepted, in which his failing memory made him perpetually fancy that he had no property, and was become poor. Except in that interval, his life had been happy above the common lot. No unpleasing circumstances ever dwelt upon his joyous imagination.

The pleasure he took in my attendance and caresses, survived till within the three last months, amidst the general wreck of sensibility. His reply to my inquiries after his health, was always, "Pretty well, my darling;" and when I gave him his food and his wine, "That's my darling," with a smile of comfort and delight, inex-

pressibly dear to my heart. I often used to ask him if he loved me ; his almost constant answer was : " Do I love my own eyes ? "

These pleasures are passed, dear miss Williams ; and their recollection is yet too mournfully impressed, to admit an idea of mixing soon with the gay and busy world.

Adieu ! Yours faithfully,

Anna Seward.

LETTER VI.

To Thomas Christie, esq.

Lichfield, July 1, 1790.

Yes, my kind friend, Heaven has at length deprived me of that dear parent to whom I was ever most tenderly attached ; and whose infirmities, exciting my hourly pity, increased the pangs of final separation. It is in vain that my reason reproached the selfishness of my sorrow.

I cannot receive, as my due, the praise you lavish upon my filial attentions. Too passionate was my affection to have had any merit in devoting myself to its duties. I made no sacrifices ; for pleasure lost its nature and its name, when I was absent from my father. I studied his ease and comfort, because I delighted to see him cheerful ; and, when every energy of spirit was sunk in languor, to see him tranquil. It was my assiduous endeavour to guard him from every pain, and every danger, because his sufferings gave me misery, and the thoughts of losing him, anguish.

And thus did strong affection leave nothing to be performed by the sense of duty. I hope it would have produced the same attentions on my part ; but I am not entitled to say that it would, or to accept of commendation for tenderness so involuntary.

It gives me pleasure that your prospects are so bright. A liberal and extended commerce may be as favourable to the expansion of superior abilities as any other profession ; and it is certainly a much more cheerful employment than that of medicine. The humane physician must have his quiet perpetually invaded by the sorrows of those who look anxiously up to him for relief, which no human art can, perhaps, administer.

You are very good to wish to see me in London ; but I have no near view of going thither. You will be sorry to hear that I have lost my health ; and that I am oppressed with symptoms of an hereditary and a dangerous disease.

Lichfield has been my home since I was seven years old : this house since I was thirteen ; for I am still in the palace, and I do not think of moving at present. It is certainly much too large for my wants, and for my income ; yet is my attachment so strong to the scene, that, if I recover, I am tempted to try, what strict economy, in other respects, will do towards enabling me to remain in a mansion, endeared to me as the tablet on which the pleasures of my youth are impressed, and the images of those that are everlastingly absent.

Adieu ! Yours &c.

Anna Seward.

LETTER VII.

To Mrs. Short.

Scarborough, July 29, 1793.

It was only a few days since, and at this place, that I heard of the death of dear Mrs. Stow*. How deeply your affectionate heart has felt the pains of this separation, I know from experience ; and I feel a

* Mrs. Short's mother-in-law.

keen sympathy with those pains, which can perhaps result alone from having felt them.

The long cherished, the long beloved, of your heart, is no more. She falls, ripe fruit, into the lap of our general mother. I know that though she did not give you birth, you will often recall her image ; and weep that the venerable form is now with you only in ideal presence.

I fear that your deeply injured constitution will suffer yet further from this event: but sweet is the consoling consciousness, so plenteously yours, of having, during many years, administered with unwearied care and tenderness, those comforts to her declining age, which not only cheered it, but undoubtedly prolonged its date.

I think and talk of you frequently, though our mutual avocations estrange our pens from each other ; and never does your idea present itself to my mind, unaccompanied by the warmest wishes for the restoration of your health : but your friend, Mr. Barber, from whom I learned last week your recent loss, could not afford me satisfaction on that interesting theme.

It is in pursuit of health that I have travelled thus far. The excursion has shown me some engaging characters, amidst the large mass of folly, vanity, and pride, which are continually exhibiting their withering effect upon the social pleasures. Some of the sweetest of those pleasures, which I have tasted since I left home, arose from my renewed intercourse with the Westella family, unbeheld through so many years. I passed three delightful days on my way hither, where formerly many an animated week had, at different periods, speeded away.

Miss Sykes* is a very charming woman, elegant and

* Married, in 1796, to Henry Thornton, esq.

graceful in her form and address. By the best chosen studies, she has assiduously cultivated her naturally fine talents ; and her benevolent virtues have the most active energy. In her native village, she has established two charity schools, to which she constantly attends like a ministering angel ; nor can any thing exceed the sweetness of her filial duties and attentions to her admirable parents. I am sure you will be glad to hear that the fair and gentle girl, whom you used so kindly to play with, during the time she was my pupil, is become so bright a pattern of female excellence.

My long-valued friend, Mr. Dewes, is here, with his brother and sister Granville : but he is lamentably out of health ; nor does his disease yield, as we hoped, to the effects of sea-air. Heaven restore him ; and comfort you under the regrets of deprivation !

I am, &c.

Anna Seward.

LETTER VIII.

To Mr. Saville.

Mansfield Woodhouse, Sept. 19, 1796.

I thank God for the hitherto safe course of a journey that now bends homewards. Ever welcome is that consciousness ; for pleasant are my domestic bowers, and dear are the friends whose society gilds them. Yesterday evening, by six o'clock, I arrived at Woodhouse, the village of acknowledged beauty ; and I was welcomed with all that energetic affection, which has ever marked good Mrs. Mompesson's attachment to me.

When I arose, at seven this morning, the sun was veiled in heavy, autumnal mists. By eight, they rolled away ; and the orb looked out in golden beauty. I hastened to ascend the steep, little lawn, that immedi-

ately rises from the low-roofed, but pleasant old mansion, and at whose top commences the pretty shrubbery which winds, as I have before described to you, round a field of about two acres.

I passed ten days very agreeably at Chesterfield, with my friends, doctor and Mrs. Stokes. On Saturday, Mr. Jebb, cousin of the present sir Richard Jebb, and of the late amiable, and distinguished Dr. John Jebb, took Mrs. Jebb, Mrs. Stokes, and myself, in his carriage, to pay an interesting visit to his father ; who resides in a little Eden of his own creation, about two miles from Chesterfield. Every tree of the woods that curtain his swelling hill, was planted by his own hands. He retired from business to this rural abode, about fifty years ago.

If this venerable gentleman live till February twelve-month, he will have completed his century ; and if he live till February three years, he will have lived in three centuries. He is the greatest wonder of intelligence so nearly centennial, that perhaps has ever existed in modern times ; for he has no chimeras in his brain, and his memory is perfectly sound, not only concerning long past, but very recent transactions. It is within the last year only, that his limbs are become too feeble to allow him to walk further than across the room. His teeth are all gone, and their desertion has impaired his utterance a little ; but he is not defective either in sight, or hearing, in any marked degree.

I cannot express with what an awed tenderness I was affected, when this very reverend personage rose, with mild grace, to receive me. He is a perfect Nestor in eloquence. "Madam," said he, "I am glad to see you. I remember your father a sprightly bachelor. I travelled from London with him, when he went to take

possession of the living of Eyam. He was a lovely man ; of a fine person, and of a frank, communicative spirit. Soon after that period, he married a beautiful young lady, your mother, madam.—Mr. Seward, as you know, had travelled ; and he spoke admirably of the customs and manners of foreign nations." I wept with pleasure at this testimony of respect to my father's memory, from a character thus venerable.

He indulged my inquiries after the habits of a life protracted to uncommon length, and singularly illuminated by the duration of the mental powers. " Madam," said he, "I was not naturally a strong man. I was so feeble till sixteen, that my mother despaired of my arriving at manhood. The virulent disorder that fled about me, settled in my hand about that period ; and obliged me to suffer the amputation of my forefinger. After that time, I had no violent disease ; but I was never strong, never enjoyed robust health. Nor was I, at any time, guilty of excesses ; I neither eat nor drank immoderately ; I abstained from meat suppers ; I went early to rest, and rose early ; I was seldom out of my bed at ten in the evening, or in it after five in the fine seasons, or after seven in the winter ; and I dined at two o'clock. I am glad I was not born in this strange, unnatural period, in which all the great and wealthy, and most of the middle ranks of life, like their own ways better than God's ways ; exhaust themselves by sitting up, and revelling, through the night, and enervate themselves by late, and some by noontide slumberings. Madam, they shut their eyes upon the flush and resplendence of the day ; rob their bodies of the strengthening power of the early and fresh gales, and their minds of the pleasure of watching the joyous comforts, which the fresh and bright hours diffuse upon the animal world,

that act under instinct. It was always my delight to see the busy birds, with gay industry, collecting food for themselves and for their young ; to hearken to their songs, and to the lowings of the cattle, at early day ; and to imagine them hymns to God of thankfulness and praise."

Thus did this old man of ninety eight, pour, on my charmed ear, though in the tremulous and piping tones of second, personal childhood, the blended oratory of an elevated imagination, and of a feeling and pious heart !

He told me also, that it had been his annual custom, till this year, that he thought himself too infirm for the attempt, to take a summer's journey either to Matlock, Buxton, Cheltenham, or some of the coasts. "Last year, madam," continued he, "on the twenty first of August, I set off for Scarborough ; and there I breathed the sea-air, during twenty days. I always thought those journeys renovated my aged body ; and the sea-air revived me last year."

I asked after the quantity and nature of his liquor. "When I grew very old, the physicians ordered me three glasses of white wine after dinner, and three after supper ; but, of late years, I have drunk only two after dinner, and not any after supper."—"By a physician's order, sir, did you lessen the quantity of wine at so advanced a period of life?"—"Yes, madam ; by that of a very able physician,—Dr. Experience."

O ! that it would please God so to lengthen your days, my friend,

"To age, thus melting in scarce felt decay,
Gliding in modest innocence away !"

I am convinced, that the sensibility and piety of your

heart would administer similar cordials of grateful and happy sympathy, with the felicity which results to instinctive creation from the bounties of its Maker ; and surely such cordials are highly propitious to the vital powers. The exhilaration which they inspire, strengthens while it stimulates. No baneful lassitude succeeds. But I fear you will never have resolution to acquire the habit of ten o'clock retreat, and of early rising, so essential to health, particularly in declining life.

Bracing and restorative is the fresh morning air, and salutary are the slumbers which precede midnight. I wish we could all learn to live naturally : we should then live more happily, better, and longer.

I am &c.

Anna Seward.

LETTER IX.

To the rev. T. S. Whalley.

Lichfield, Nov. 13, 1798.

The sight of your handwriting on my table, increased the pleasure I have hitherto almost always felt on returning to this scene, after an absence of many weeks ; but alas ! ere I had been a fortnight at home, the death of dear Mrs. Mompesson *, was announced to me. Six weeks of last winter she was my guest :

“And she was one who, when the wind and rain
Beat dark December, knew well to discourse
The freezing hours away.”

* This lady was the great granddaughter of Mr. Mompesson, rector of Eyam, of whom an interesting account is given in a letter of miss Seward's, inserted in the preceding part of this work. Mrs. Mompesson died unmarried : she was beloved, and her loss was regretted, by all who knew her, for she was worthy of the name of Mompesson.

A letter, that spoke cheerily of her health, came to me at Buxton but one short month before her death. No information of its since changed state had reached me. Thus I was wholly unprepared for the shock. This final letter had pressed my going to her at Woodhouse, ere I left a place which was so much nearer than Lichfield. Unapprehensive of her danger, as she herself then was, I feared for my rheumatic complaints, still heavy upon me, the autumnal damps of a spot so low, so irriguous, and embowered; and, as we had been very recently together, begged her to excuse my compliance. Had I suspected that an existence, which I so much valued, was near its close, I should have obeyed her injunction. My ignorance of her danger preserved me from the shock of witnessing the near approach of her dissolution, probably the sad event itself; but I could not voluntarily have shrunk from the mournful duties of such hours.

I believe you know that she had been invariably attached to me from my sixteenth year; the indulgent friend and confident of my youthful pleasures and pains, though twenty years my senior. I have seldom known a better, and never a happier woman. She had great energy of mind, strength of understanding, firmness of purpose, and promptness of action. She knew much of life, of characters, of manners; and had explored them on the continent as well as at home. In historic and chronologic knowledge, she was, from her wonderful memory, a living library. Her language had vigour and ease, and, when she was warm on her subject, eloquence; but she had not sufficiently cultivated her imagination to relish poetry or painting. She loved music, from a naturally good ear; but she was a stranger to the noblest delight it can impart, and which results from its union

with beautiful poetry. Her adherence to truth was unswerving; her sincerity taintless. Her affections, her enthusiasm, her zeal to serve her friends, and even her slightest acquaintance, when opportunity offered, were unchilled by age and disappointing experience, and preserved, till her last hour, the energy and unsoiled simplicity of youth. I do verily believe she enjoyed every fortunate occurrence in the destiny of her friends, and even in that of her mere acquaintance, yet more and longer than they themselves enjoyed it. To her it came unalloyed. She was never weary of thinking and talking on the subject; of looking back to the disquiets which it had dissipated, and to the peace and pleasures which it promised.

Thus was her vivid sympathy a source of constant delight, while the pains which it occasioned, from the misfortunes and sorrows of her connexions and acquaintance, though very keen for a time, were, ere long, consoled by religious resignation, and by the ascending power of a cheerful temperament. She was pious without austerity; and generous on a very limited income. What recompensing qualities for a repulsive exterior!

I hear, as I expected to hear, that she is extremely lamented by all ranks of people in the vicinity of her pleasant home; which the pretty brook that passed through her garden, her love of landscape and of outdoor employment, had rendered so crystal, so lawny, and so sylvan. Her wealthy neighbours have lost a most entertaining and instructive companion; the indigent around her, a steady friend, earnest to relieve their wants, to the last limits of discreet generosity, and ever ready to compose their feuds by arbitration, on the impartial justice of which experience had taught them to rely.—Her memory is consecrated in my heart; which

does not suffer those whom it loved to lie forgotten in the grave.

I will not apologize to you for having sketched her portrait upon so wide a canvass. She was no every day character.

You are pleased with colonel Addington; and I am not less delighted with his sister, the elegant, the eloquent, and interesting Mrs. Goodenough, with whom I had lately the pleasure of passing a few hours of very rapid wing.

Ah, friend! how political prejudice can betray into uncandid decision the clearest heads and kindest hearts! You perceive I allude to the sentences which close your letter.—Adieu! and believe, that it is not in the wide difference of our opinion concerning those measures which may best preserve the welfare of this country, to alienate from you any portion of the esteem and regard of

Anna Seward.

CHAPTER XV.

LETTERS OF SEVERAL DISTINGUISHED PERSONS.

LETTER I.

William Melmoth, esq. to ———.

May 5, 1743.

If you received the first account of my loss from other hands than mine, you must impute it to the dejection of mind into which that event threw me. The blow, indeed, fell with too much severity, to leave me capable of recollecting myself enough to write to you immediately: as there cannot, perhaps, be a greater shock to a breast of any sensibility, than to see its earliest and most valuable connexions irreparably broken; to find itself for ever torn from the first and most endeared object of its highest veneration. At least, the affection and esteem I bore to that excellent parent were founded upon so many and so uncommon motives, that his death has given me occasion to lament not only a most tender father, but a most valuable friend.

That I can no longer enjoy the benefit of his animating example, is one among the many aggravating circumstances of my affliction; and I often apply to myself what an excellent ancient has said upon a similar occasion, "*Vereor ne nunc negligentius vivam.*" There is nothing, in truth, puts us so much upon our guard, as to act under the constant inspection of one, whose virtues as well as years, have rendered him venerable. Never, indeed, did the dignity of goodness appear more irresistible in any man: yet there was something at the

same time so gentle in his manners, such an innocence and a cheerfulness in his conversation, that he was as sure to gain affection as to inspire reverence.

It has been observed, (and I think, by Cowley,) that a man in much business must either make himself a knave, or the world will make him a fool. If there is any truth in this observation, it is not, however, without exceptions. My father was early engaged in the great scenes of business, in which he continued almost to his very last hour ; yet he preserved his integrity firm and unbroken, through all those powerful assaults which he must necessarily have encountered in so long a course of action.

If it were justice, indeed, to his other virtues, to single out any particular one as shining with superior lustre to the rest, I should point to his probity as the brightest part of his character. But the truth is, the whole tenour of his conduct was one uniform exercise of every quality that can adorn and exalt human nature. To defend the injured, to relieve the indigent, to protect the distressed, were the chief end and aim of all his endeavours ; and his principal motive both for engaging and persevering in his profession, was, to enable himself more abundantly to gratify so glorious an ambition.

No man had a higher relish for the pleasures of retired and contemplative life ; as none was more qualified to enter into those calm scenes with greater ease and dignity. He had nothing to make him desirous of flying from the reflections of his own mind ; nor any passions which his moderate patrimony would not have been more than sufficient to gratify. But to live for himself only, was not consistent with his generous and enlarged sentiments. It was a spirit of benévolence that led him into the active scenes of the world : upon any other principle,

he would either never have entered into them, or soon have renounced them. And it was that godlike spirit which conducted and supported him through his useful progress, to the honour and interest of his family and friends ; and to the benefit of every creature that could possibly be comprehended within the extensive circle of his beneficence.

I well know, my dear —, the high regard you pay to every character of merit in general, and the esteem in which you held this most valuable man in particular. I am sure, therefore, you would not forgive me were I to make an apology for leaving with you this private monument of my veneration for a parent, whose least and lowest claim to my gratitude and esteem, is, that I am indebted to him for my birth.

Adieu ! I am &c.

William Melmoth.

LETTER II.

*Rev. James Hervey to his godson, Paul Orchard, esq.
of Stoke Abbey, in Devonshire.*

Weston Favel, near Northampton,

Dear sir,

July 14, 1747.

As your honoured father was pleased to make choice of me, to answer in your name at the font, and to exercise a sort of guardianship over your spiritual interests, permit me, by putting these little treatises* into your hand, to fulfil some part of that solemn obligation.

Gratitude for many signal favours, and a conscientious regard to my sacred engagement, have long inspired my breast with the warmest wishes, both for your true dig-

* Contemplations on the Night, &c.

nity, and for your real happiness. Nor can I think of a more endearing, or a more effectual way, of advancing either the one or the other, than to set before you a sketch of your excellent father's character.—Illustrious examples are the most winning incitements to virtue. And none can come attended with so particular a recommendation to you, sir, as the pattern of that worthy person, from whom you derive your very being.

A cordial and reverential esteem for the Divine Word, was one of his most remarkable qualities. Those oracles of Heaven were his principal delight, and his inseparable companions. With unwearied assiduity, he exercised himself in the law of the Lord. Thence he derived his maxims of wisdom, and formed his judgment of things. The precepts of the Gospel, were the model of his temper, and the guide of his life ; and its precious promises, were the joy of his heart, and his portion for ever.

Few gentlemen were better furnished, either with richness of fancy, or copiousness of expression, to bear a shining part in conversation. With these talents, he always endeavoured to give some useful, generally some religious, turn to the discourse. Nor did he ever reflect, with greater complacency, on his social hours, than when they tended to glorify the Eternal Majesty ; and to awaken in himself and others, a more lively spirit of devotion.

To form projects for the good of others, and to carry those benevolent plans into execution, was his favourite employment.—When visited by the young persons of his neighbourhood, far from initiating them in debauchery, or confirming them in a riotous habit ; it was his incessant aim, by finely adapted persuasives, to encourage them in industry, and to establish them in a course of

sobriety ; to guard them against the allurements of vice, and to animate them with the principles of piety. A noble hospitality ! which will probably transmit its beneficial influence, to their earthly possessions ; to their future families ; and even to their everlasting state.

A conviction of human weakness, and a thorough persuasion of the Divine all-sufficiency, induced him to be frequent in prayer ; to prostrate himself, in profound adoration, before that infinitely exalted Being, who dwells in light inaccessible ; and to implore the continuance of the Almighty favour, and the increase of all Christian graces. In those moments, no doubt, he remembered you, sir, with particular earnestness ; and lodged many an ardent petition in the court of Heaven, for his infant son. Cease not to second them with your own devout supplications, that they may descend upon your head, in the blessings of the Gospel of peace.

To give their genuine lustre to all his other endowments, he was careful to maintain a humble mind. Though his friends might admire his superior abilities, or his acquaintance applaud his exemplary behaviour, he saw how far he fell short of the mark of his high calling ; saw, and lamented, his defects ; knew and renounced himself : relying, for final acceptance, and endless felicity, on a better righteousness than his own ; even on the transcendently perfect righteousness, and inconceivably precious death, of Jesus the Redeemer. This was the rock of his hope, and the crown of his rejoicing.

These, sir, are some of the distinguishing characteristics of your deceased parent. As you had the misfortune to lose so valuable a relative, before you were capable of forming any acquaintance with his person, I flatter myself, you will the more attentively observe his picture :

his moral picture ; designed, not to be set in gold, or sparkle in enamel, but to breathe in your heart, and to live in all your conduct. Though it is entirely your own, calculated purely for yourself, it may possibly, like the family pieces in your parlour, make some pleasing and useful impression on every beholder. But you, sir, are peculiarly concerned to copy the amiable original. As the order of an indulgent Providence has made you heir of his affluent circumstances, let not a gay inadvertence cut you off from the richer inheritance of his noble qualifications. They will be your security, amidst all the glittering dangers which are inseparable from blooming years, and an elevated situation in life. They will lead you to true greatness, and solid happiness.

Tread in your father's steps, and you will give inexpressible joy to one of the best of mothers ; you will become an extensive blessing to your fellow creatures ; and you will be the delight, the honour, and the boast of, dear sir,

Your very affectionate godfather,

James Hervey.

LETTER III.

Mr. Samuel Boyse to the rev. James Hervey.

Reverend and dear sir,

For your tender admonitions and excellent advice, I am truly indebted to you ; as they discover a generous and compassionate concern for my better part.—I bless God I have reason to hope, that the great work is not now to do ; for of all the marks of infatuation I know amongst men, there can be none equal to that of trusting to a deathbed repentance.

I do not pretend to vindicate my own conduct ;—nor can I ever forget the very Christian sense of my condi-

tion and misfortunes, which, notwithstanding all my misbehaviour, you have so pathetically expressed.—The follies of my youth have furnished a plentiful harvest of reflection for my latter years. I have been now for a long time, in a manner, buried from the world; and it has been my endeavour to spend that time in lamenting my past errors, and in pursuing a course of life void of offence towards God and man.

I have learned to trust in God as my only portion, and to bless him for his fatherly corrections. They have been much gentler than my demerit. By them I have been taught to know HIM and myself; his infinite mercy and goodness, and my own ingratitude and unworthiness: so that I may truly say with the returning prodigal; “Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and against thee; and I am not worthy to be called thy son.”

My health is in a very precarious state; and the greatest hopes of recovery I have, (which are very small,) arise from warm weather and the country air.—I thank God I am absolutely resigned to his holy and blessed will, I have seen enough of the vanity and folly of earthly things, and how insufficient they are to satisfy the desires of an immortal soul. I am sensible of my own wretchedness and nothingness; and that my only hope of salvation is through that blessed Redeemer, who died to save lost sinners.—This is my rock of hope against an approaching eternity.

May you, sir, long taste those true and unfading pleasures, which attend the practice of religion and virtue; and may you, by your shining example, be a means of turning many to righteousness! This is the sincere and ever-grateful wish of

Your most obliged, and faithful servant,

Samuel Boyse.

LETTER IV.

Dr. Cotton to Dr. Doddridge.

St. Alban's, April 29, 1749.

Dear and honoured sir,

I am very much obliged to you for your late tender instances of condescension and friendship. The comfort and advice, which you most kindly administer, are extremely acceptable; and I heartily pray God to give them their due weight. For my own part, I am, and I have long been, abundantly persuaded, that no system, but that of Christianity, is able to sustain the soul amidst all the difficulties and distresses of life. The consolations of philosophy only, are specious trifles at best; all cold and impotent applications indeed to the bleeding heart! But the religion of Jesus, like its gracious and benevolent author, is an inexhaustible source of comfort in this world, and gives us the hopes of everlasting enjoyment in the next.

I presume humbly to hope, that the Supreme Being will support me under my affliction; and I most earnestly entreat, that he will sanctify my sorrows to every gracious and good purpose.

What the mind feels upon so painful a divorce, none can adequately know, but they who have had the bitter experience of this sad solemnity. However, delicate and worthy minds will readily paint out to themselves something unutterably soft and moving, on the separation of two hearts, whose only division was their lodgment in two breasts.

I am extremely indebted to your lady, for her kind sympathy with me in my sorrows; and the only return that I can make to herself and her consort, is my hearty

prayer, that the dissolution of their happy union may be at a very distant period.

I am, with the highest esteem, dear sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

Nathaniel Cotton.

LETTER V.

Rev. Basil Woodd to Dr. Conyers.

Greenwich Road, Nov. 25, 1784.

Reverend and dear sir,

The following particulars, relative to my dearest and most amiable parent, I flatter myself will be far from unacceptable to you. I collected them for my own private satisfaction, that the remembrance of a friend, now in glory, whom I so dearly loved, might excite me to be more earnest in pressing forwards to the same prize. But upon reflecting that they might be serviceable to others as well as myself; and prove an additional and well authenticated testimony to the power of religion; I felt an inclination to communicate them to my friends.

My dear and honoured mother was born at Richmond in Surry, on the nineteenth of April, 1736. In 1759, she was married to Mr. Basil Woodd; who also was born at Richmond, in 1730, and with whom she had been acquainted from her infancy.

Such a union, cemented by long endearment, and by similarity of disposition, promised a scene of much temporal felicity: but other events a mysterious Providence intended. In January following, my father, being from home on a visit, was seized with a violent fever; and he died on the twelfth of that month. So great a shock, on a mind of her sensibility, could leave no faint impression; but it pleased God to support her in this severe

trial ; and on the fifth of August following she was delivered of a son. Providence wonderfully interposed in our favour ; and both root and branch, though then apparently withering, were preserved together, as many years longer as she had then lived.

The afflictive circumstance of my father's death, proved an eventual blessing to her, though conveyed in the disguise of wo. By one stroke her mind was severed from worldly prospects ; and she began more anxiously to seek the knowledge and love of the Creator. She had, from early life, been of a devout turn of mind, a strict observer of moral duties, and of the ritual of religion ; but now, in the day of adversity, she became more deeply sensible of the insufficiency of her own righteousness, and the necessity of a Saviour. Pious friends who sympathized in her affliction, observed the spiritual concern of her mind, and availed themselves of this opportunity to bring her under the power of the Gospel. In the spirit of true Christian friendship, they made her acquainted with sound, evangelical principles. She received them in faith and love ; adorned them in her life ; and found them her triumph in her dying hour.

From this period, the Christian motive of love to her Lord gave life and spirituality to her moral duties. Religious exercises became her soul's delight. She ordinarily retired three times in the day for private prayer ; at morning, noon, and evening. Love to God led her, with cheerful feet, to the courts of the Lord's House : a privilege which she so highly valued, that she rarely permitted inclement weather, or the decay of her health, to interfere with it.

Though filial affection may be suspected of exaggerating a mother's excellence, yet I must do her the justice to say, that in every department, in which I could

observe her, she was a lovely ornament of religion; particularly, as a daughter, a mother, and a mistress.

As a daughter, she was very kindly attentive to her father, who died at the advanced age of eighty seven; and on his deathbed, acknowledged, in the most affecting manner, his long experience of her filial duty.

As a mother, I must repeat what you, my dear sir, have frequently said, that you never saw such an instance of maternal affection. This indeed is a subject, on which I hope I shall never think without heart-felt gratitude to her, and to God who gave me so excellent a parent. As I was her only child, and she a widow, she might, perhaps, lean to the side of over-indulgence. Yet, if my heart does not deceive me in trusting that I love the ways of God, I am indebted, through Divine grace, for that inestimable benefit, to her great and tender kindness, her uniform example, and particularly to her pious and affectionate letters when I was about thirteen years old. Such indeed has been the impression of her parental affection, that though my friends, I believe, have never charged me with filial negligence, yet, since her decease, I have regretted very frequently that, in many little instances, I conceive I might have shown her still more respect and affection.

As a mistress, she exhibited not less excellence. If she erred, her error was the excess of kindness and humility. In the few changes which happened in her service, her first attention was to the spiritual welfare of a new servant. And I have the pleasure to state, that by the Divine blessing on her pious conversation, on the religious books which she put into their hands, and on the kindness of her deportment, three of her servants were awakened to a deep sense of religion.

If she observed, in any of her acquaintance, the least

appearance of incipient piety, I well remember with what tender anxiety she would pray for them, warn them, encourage them, and strive to fan the spark, and prevent its expiring.

Yet, with this amiable lustre of character, while no one doubted of her eternal safety, she was full of doubts and fears herself. Self-suspicion, and a dread of judging too favourably of herself, prevailed in her mind.

In the year 1779, it pleased God to lay the foundation of the disorder which at length occasioned her death. A severe fit of illness confined her to her room for six or seven months. From that time she was much afflicted with a species of rheumatic gout, which occasioned great pain, weakness, and swelling, in her joints. The last year of her life, she was unable to rise from her seat without assistance; and was almost in a state of helplessness. The disorder, at length, attacked her stomach. An entire loss of appetite took place; and a perpetual sickness, which baffled all medicine.

God now visited her soul with more peculiar manifestations of his love. She believed her end to be approaching; and seemed to be gradually filled with unspeakable joy as the day drew nigh, which for ever terminated all her sorrows.

On the Sunday preceding her decease, she took hold of my hand, and seemed much animated. "God," said she, "my dear, has been very gracious to me!—I am very happy! I am going to my mansion in the skies. I shall soon be there; and O! I shall be glad to receive you.—If ever you have a family, tell your children they had a grandmother who feared God, and found the comfort of it on her deathbed.—I exhort you to preach the Gospel, faithfully and boldly.—Endeavour to put in a word of comfort to the humble believer; to the poor

and the weak. I heartily wish you success; may you be useful to the souls of many!"

After she had dictated the letter to you, which was delivered to you the next day, she spoke with transport of the boundless love of Christ, and of his salvation. "It is," she cried out, "a glorious salvation!—a free, unmerited salvation!—a complete, eternal salvation! It is a deliverance from every enemy.—It is a supply of every want.—It is all I can wish for in time.—It is all I can now wish for in death.—It is all I shall want in eternity."

She then thanked and praised God for the great comfort which we had experienced in each other; for the union which subsisted between us; and for the blessed hope that, though we parted for a season, we should one day meet, to part no more.

On the following day, she mentioned the circumstance of a person, who, in an agony of mind upon his death-bed, said: "How shall I go through this great scene?" She paused for a few minutes, and then exclaimed: "It is a blessed scene, it is a glorious scene, to me!—I am going to my God;—I shall see the King in his beauty;—I shall be for ever near him;—I shall for ever sing his praises."—Her heart seemed almost overpowered with sensations of gratitude, in reflecting upon God's goodness towards her. "God," said she, "has greatly indulged my desires; has answered my prayers in a wonderful manner. How mercifully has he dealt with me in sparing me so long, to see you, my son, so much settled in life!"

The hour was now approaching in which I was to part with the valuable parent, to whom I had been so long endeared; whom I highly respected and sincerely loved as a friend, and admired as a real Christian. Se-

verely keen were my sensations: this event had been all my life dreaded. But the agonies of pain to which I had been an eyewitness, reconciled me, in some degree, to a separation; and the assured confidence of her eternal salvation, would not permit me but to rejoice in the approaching felicity of one, to whom I was so nearly related.—How thankful ought I to feel, that her valuable life was so long continued; and that I had, for so many years, the benefit of her instruction, her example, and her prayers!

On Friday morning, the twelfth of November, 1784, my beloved parent expired.

Shall I murmur, shall I repine, at such an event? Forbid it resignation! forbid it filial affection! No! let me not sorrow as one without hope. I lately had a parent languishing under continual pain; I have now a parent whom no disquietude approaches. I lately had a parent in a world of distress and danger; I have now a parent in a world of glorified spirits. I saw her lately on earth, fainting and expiring; I see her now in glory, alive for ever. I have now another attachment to the skies. O! never, let me think of her, but as in the immediate presence of her God, uniting with the countless number of the redeemed, in the eternal anthem of triumph, gratitude, and praise!

Thus, sir, I have given you a few particulars respecting my dear parent. I flatter myself that they will afford you some degree of pleasure and satisfaction

I remain, reverend and dear sir,

With the greatest respect and affection,

Your sincere and obedient servant,

Basil Woodd.

LETTER VI.

Rev. William Jones to —.

February 10, 1799.

My dear friend,

Though I am in a very low and sorrowful state, I am not insensible to the expressions of your kind, consolatory letter; for which I heartily thank you, and pray that the effect of it may remain with me. The prospect which was before me for several weeks, kept my mind under continual, and, as I feared, insupportable agitation: till, after a painful struggle, I could find no relief but by bowing my head with silent submission to the will of God; which took place only a few days before the fatal stroke. I have found it pleasant in time past to do the work of God; to demonstrate his wisdom, and to defend his truth: but, O my dear friend! I never knew till now what it is to suffer the will of God; though my life has never been long free from great trials and troubles. Nor was I fully sensible of the evil of Adam's transgression, till it took effect upon the life of my blessed companion, of whom neither I nor the world was worthy.

If I could judge of my case as an indifferent person, I should see great reason to give thanks and glory to God for his mercies. We had every preparatory comfort; and death, at last, came in such a form as to seem disarmed of his sting. A pious clergyman of this neighbourhood, who is my good friend, administered the communion to my wife, in her bedchamber, while she was well enough to kneel by his side: and he declared to me afterwards, that he was charmed and edified by the sight; for the peace of Heaven was visible in her countenance. I observed the same; and I earnestly wish

that look could have been taken and preserved ; it would have been a sermon to the end of the world.

On the last evening of her life, she sat with me in the parlour where I am now writing. I read the lessons of the day to her as usual : in the first of which there was this remarkable passage ; “ And the time drew nigh that Israel must die.” Of this I felt the effects ; but made no remarks. On her last morning, we expected her below stairs : but, at eleven o’clock, as I was going out to church, to join with the congregation in praying for her, an alarming drowsiness seized upon her, and she seemed as a person literally falling asleep. At the point of noon, it appeared that she was gone : but the moment of her dying could not be distinguished ; it was more like a translation.

I have reason to remember, with great thankfulness, that her life was preserved a year longer than I expected : in consequence of which I had the blessing of her attendance in a tedious illness last summer ; under which I should probably have sunk, if she had been taken away sooner. It pleased God that when she grew worse, I became better, and able to attend her with all the zeal which the tenderest affection could inspire. But how different were our services ! She, though with the weakness of a woman, and in her seventy fifth year, had the fortitude of a man, I mean of a Christian ; and all her conversation tended to lessen the evils of life, while it inspired hope and patience under them. The support which she administered, was such as might have been expected from an angel ; while I, when my turn came, was too much overwhelmed with the affliction of a weak mortal.

My loss comprehends every thing that was most valuable to me upon earth !—I have lost the manager,

whose vigilant attention to my worldly affairs, and exact method in ordering my family, preserved my mind at liberty to pursue my studies without waste of time, or distraction of thought.—I have lost my almoner who understood the wants of the poor, better than I did ; and who was always ready to supply them to the best of our ability.—I have lost my counsellor, who generally knew what was proper to be done in difficult cases, and to whom I always found it of some advantage to submit my compositions ; and whose mind, being little disturbed with passions, was ever inclined to peaceable and Christian measures.—I have lost my example, who observed a strict method of daily devotion, from which nothing could divert her ; and whose patience, under every kind of trial, seemed invincible. She was blessed with the rare gift of an equal, and a cheerful temper ; and preserved it, under a long course of ill health, I may say for forty years. To have reached her age would to her have been impossible without that quiet, humble spirit, which never admitted of murmuring or complaining. It might be of use to some good people to know, that she had formed her mind according to the rules of the excellent bishop Taylor, in his “ Holy Living and Dying ;” an author of whom she was a great admirer, in common with our dear friend, bishop Horne.—I have lost my companion whose conversation was of itself sufficient for me, to the surprise of some of my neighbours, who remarked how much of our time we spent in solitude, and wondered what we could find to converse about. But her mind was so well furnished, and her objects were so well selected, that there were few subjects in which we had not a common interest.—I have lost my best friend, who, regardless of herself, studied my ease and advantage in every thing.

These blessings are gone as a vision of the night : the memory of them will always be upon my mind, during the remainder of my journey ; through which I must now travel alone. But I need not be solitary, if the Word of God be my companion, and his Holy Spirit my guide, till I shall once more join my departed saint, never more to be separated ; which God grant in his own good time !

I am your faithful and afflicted friend,

William Jones.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES

OF THE

WRITERS FROM WHOM THE LETTERS ARE SELECTED.

ARBUTHNOT, John,—a celebrated physician, scholar, and wit, was born, soon after the Restoration, at Arbuthnot, near Montrose; and died in London, on the twenty seventh of February, 1735.

Dr. Johnson, in his life of Pope, describes the character of Dr. Arbuthnot in the following striking terms. "Arbuthnot was estimable for his learning, amiable for his life, and venerable for his piety. He was a man of great comprehension, skilful in his profession, versed in the sciences, acquainted with ancient literature, and able to animate his mass of knowledge by a bright and active imagination: a scholar with great brilliance of wit; a wit, who, in the crowd of life, retained and discovered a noble ardour of religious zeal." He was much beloved and esteemed by the most eminent persons of his time. "He has more wit than we all have," said Swift, "and his humanity is equal to his wit."

His principal work is "Tables of ancient Coins, Weights, and Measures." He published also some professional treatises; and several pieces of wit and humour.—His letters, contained in Pope's Epistolary Correspondence, are written with ease and beautiful simplicity. His thoughts seem to drop from his pen as they rise into his mind. "One of the most interesting and manly letters in the collection addressed to Pope," says Mr. Hayley, "is the last of Arbuthnot's," (inserted in this volume,) "containing the dying advice of that genuine, accomplished friend, to the too irritable poet."

ATTERBURY, Francis,—bishop of Rochester, was born on the sixth of March, 1662. He was, from early youth, distinguished by his fine talents, great learning, and aspiring mind. In 1713, he was advanced, by queen Ann, to the episcopal dignity. On the accession of king George the first, he gave strong proofs of disaffection to the government. In 1722, he was committed to the Tower, on suspicion of being concerned in a plot in favour of the pretender; and in the following year, he was deprived, by a special act of parliament, of all his offices, benefices, and dignities, and was banished the realm. He spent the remainder of his days in exile; and died, at Paris, on the fifteenth of February, 1732.

The character of Atterbury, both in a moral and a political point of view, has been variously represented; but it is universally agreed that he was a man of uncommon abilities, a fine writer, and an eloquent preacher.—His works are, chiefly, Sermons in four volumes octavo, and controversial pieces. His letters, published in the Epistolary Correspondence of Mr. Pope, are remarkable for their ease and elegance; and they exhibit him, in a pleasing light, both as a writer and as a man.

BARKER, John,—a dissenting minister in London, and author of two volumes of sermons. The rev. Mr. Stedman; editor of "Letters to and from Dr. Doddridge," says that he had endeavoured, but in vain, to procure some biographical information respecting Mr. Barker.—His pious and beautiful letter to Dr. Doddridge, which is inserted in this volume, was written during the last illness of that excellent man. He shed tears on the perusal of it; and was deeply affected with the friendship which it expressed, and with the divine consolations, which it administered.

BEATTIE, James,—an eminent poet and moral philosopher, was born on the twenty fifth of October, 1735,

at Lawrencekirk, in the county of Kincardine, in Scotland. His parents kept a small retail shop in his native village: they were poor, but honest and respectable. He received his early education at the parish school of Lawrencekirk; and, by means of a bursary, he was enabled to pursue a course of academical studies in Marischal college, Aberdeen. When he left the university, he was appointed parochial schoolmaster at Fordoun, a small village near Lawrencekirk. He continued there about five years; and then went to Aberdeen, where he spent the remainder of his life. On the eighth of October, 1760, he was installed professor of moral philosophy and logic in Marischal college; and, during a long course of years, he was indefatigable in the discharge of all the duties of that important and honourable office. By the gentlest means, he preserved the most exact discipline. He took particular pains deeply to impress the precepts of morality and religion on the minds of the young men committed to his charge. His mild manner, his amiable disposition, and his fine talents, rendered him the object of their mingled love, respect, and admiration.

In 1770, he published his first work, (except some juvenile poems,) his celebrated "Essay on the nature and immutability of Truth, in opposition to Sophistry and Scepticism;" and, soon after, his beautiful poem of "The Minstrel" appeared. In testimony of high approbation of these works, particularly of the "Essay on Truth," he received, in 1773, the honorary degree of doctor of laws from the University of Oxford, and a pension of two hundred pounds a year from the king.

In the latter years of his life, Dr. Beattie experienced great afflictions, which he endured with Christian patience and resignation. His wife had sunk into a state of incurable derangement, which wholly deprived him of her society and assistance: his own health was very infirm; and he lost his two sons, the darling objects of his affection; the elder at twenty two, and the younger at seven-

teen years of age*. The death of the latter of them, Montagu Beattie, who was his last surviving child, took place in 1796 : it seemed almost to overwhelm him ; and, from that time, his health and faculties declined so rapidly, that he became incapable of all application to study or business. After repeated paralytic attacks, he had a severe stroke on the fifth of October, 1802, which deprived him altogether of the power of motion. He languished till the eighteenth of August, 1803, when it pleased the Almighty to remove him from this world, in the sixty eighth year of his age, without any pain or apparent struggle.

Virtuous tenderness of heart, and acute sensibility, were distinguishing traits in the character of Dr. Beattie. His gratitude for favours received, seemed to know no bounds. His piety was ardent. He discharged, in the most affectionate, conscientious, and exemplary manner, all the relative duties of a son, a brother, a husband, a father, and a friend.

The works of Dr. Beattie, besides those already mentioned, are : "Miscellaneous Poems ;" "An Essay on Poetry ;" "Dissertations Moral and Critical ;" "Evidences of Christianity," a popular and highly useful little treatise ; and "Elements of Moral Science."—A considerable collection of his familiar letters is contained in his life, published by his friend and executer, sir William Forbes, in two volumes quarto ; from which the preceding account is extracted.

BOYSE, Samuel,—an ingenious poet, was born at Dublin, in the year 1708. He was the son of a respectable dissenting minister. He received a liberal education ; his talents for poetry procured him, in early life, considerable patronage ; and he had many opportunities of

* Of these two promising young men an account is given in "True Stories, or, Interesting Anecdotes of young Persons."

advancing himself in the world : but through his indolence, extravagance, and dissolute conduct, he sunk into contempt, indigence; and wretchedness.

The best of his performances is his poem entitled "Deity." Pope being asked, on the first publication of it, if he were not the author, said, he was not; but that there were many lines in it, of which he should not have been ashamed. Hervey, in his *Meditations*, calls it "a very beautiful, sublime, and instructive poem." And in his *Letters*, he says : "It is a noble piece, quite poetical, truly evangelical, and admirably fitted to alarm and comfort the heart, to delight and improve."

Hearing of the author's distress, this pious and benevolent man sent him a present of two guineas, accompanied by some admonition and advice. Of his kindness, Boyse expressed a very grateful sense, in the elegant and pathetic letter, inserted in this volume; which shows that, in his last moments, he was not devoid of real piety. Indeed, he often appeared seriously disposed to religion; he frequently talked on that subject; and probably he suffered very severely from remorse of conscience. The early impressions of a good education, were never entirely obliterated from his mind; and his whole life was a continued struggle between his will and his reason. After a lingering illness, he died, in May, 1749, in obscure lodgings in London, in the forty first year of his age; and he was buried at the expense of the parish.

"This relation" (to use the forcible language of Dr. Johnson on a similar occasion) "will not be wholly without its use, if it remind those, who, in confidence of superior capacities or attainments, disregard the common maxims of life, that nothing can supply the want of prudence; and that negligence and irregularity, long continued, will make knowledge useless, wit ridiculous, and genius contemptible."

CARTER, Elizabeth,—the learned translator of Epictetus, and the author of several very pleasing little poems on moral and religious subjects, was born at Deal, on the sixteenth of December, 1717. She was the eldest daughter of the rev. Nicholas Carter, D. D. perpetual curate of the chapel in that town. Her early childhood afforded but little promise of those extraordinary attainments by which she was afterwards so eminently distinguished. She acquired the rudiments of learning with great labour and difficulty. But she had an earnest desire to be a scholar; and by the able instructions and assistance of her father, and her own indefatigable application and perseverance, she accomplished her purpose. Dr. Johnson speaking of a celebrated scholar, said he understood Greek better than any person whom he had ever known, except Elizabeth Carter.—To relieve her father, she voluntarily took upon herself the sole care of educating her youngest brother, by her father's second marriage; and she discharged the office with maternal tenderness, unwearied diligence, and the most satisfactory result. In the year 1756, her pupil, who was designed for the church, was entered at Cambridge, a pensioner of Benet College; having undergone the previous examination with great credit both to himself and his sister. About the same time, she completed her translation of the works of Epictetus, from the original Greek.

Mrs. Carter, both during her father's life and after his death, resided chiefly at Deal; but she usually spent a considerable part of the year in London, where she was much noticed, and her society courted, by the most distinguished persons of her time. The Pulteney family were particularly attached to her, and entertained a high respect for her talents and virtues. Knowing that her fortune was not adequate to her merit, they settled upon her, in 1767, an annuity for her life, of one hundred pounds a year. Mrs. Montagu, in 1775, becoming, by the death of her husband, mistress of a large fortune, did

honour both to herself and to her friend, by conferring upon her, in the most delicate manner, a similar testimony of esteem and regard.

Mrs. Carter lived to a very advanced age. Her health and bodily strength visibly declined some years before she died ; but she retained the calm, and almost unimpaired possession of all her mental powers, till within a few hours of her close. She went to London a short time before her decease ; and died there, on the nineteenth of February, 1806, in the eighty ninth year of her age. She expired without a struggle or a groan.

Mrs. Carter was good and pious from her childhood ; and as she advanced in years, her goodness and piety increased. She never allowed her literary pursuits, nor the flattering distinctions which they procured her, to interfere, in the smallest degree, with the regular and conscientious discharge of all her religious and domestic duties. Though remarkably humble, and, in early life, diffident, she took great pleasure in promoting the moral and intellectual improvement of her relatives and friends ; and, indeed, of all persons with whom she was connected. When dining at the tables of the great, she always endeavoured, as far as she could without violating the established forms of society, to give the conversation such a turn, as might be useful to the servants who were in attendance ; and thus indirectly and in the most gentle and winning manner, often impressed upon their minds truths of the greatest consequence. They listened to her discourse with the utmost earnestness ; and in all the families where she was accustomed to visit frequently, they showed her a marked and zealous attention. A lady of high rank, with whom she was intimately acquainted, used to say, that she attributed, in a very considerable degree, the general good conduct of her servants, of whom she had a large number, to their hearing so frequently the conversation of Mrs. Carter.

In the following striking admonition to young ladies.

Mrs. Hannah More has paid a just and noble tribute to the great worth of Mrs. Carter, and of another lady, scarcely less celebrated, whose early removal has given peculiar interest to her example. "Against learning, against talents of any kind, nothing can steady the head, unless we fortify the heart with real Christianity. In raising the moral edifice, we must sink deep in proportion as we build high. We must widen the foundation, if we extend the superstructure. Religion alone can counteract the aspirings of genius, can regulate the pride of talents. And let such women, as are disposed to be vain of their comparatively petty attainments, look up with admiration to those contemporary shining examples, the venerable Elizabeth Carter, and the blooming Elizabeth Smith. I knew them both; and to know was to revere them. In them, let our young ladies contemplate profound and various learning, chastised by true Christian humility; and in them, venerate acquirements, which would have been distinguished in a University, meekly softened, and beautifully shaded, by the gentle exertion of every domestic virtue, the unaffected exercise of every feminine employment."

CHATHAM, William Pitt,—earl of, a most eminent English statesman and orator, and father of the late Mr. Pitt, was born in 1708, and died in 1778.

His letters addressed to his nephew, chiefly during his residence at Cambridge, were published by lord Grenville, with the concurrence and approbation of Mr. Pitt. "They are few in number," says the noble editor, "and they contain only such detached observations, on the extensive subjects to which they relate, as occasion might happen to suggest, in the course of familiar correspondence. Yet imperfect as these remains are, they exhibit a great orator, statesman, and patriot, in one of the most interesting relations of private society. Not, in the cabinet or the senate, enforcing by a vigorous and command-

ing eloquence, those councils to which his country owed her preeminence and glory ; but implanting, with parental kindness, in the mind of an ingenuous youth, seeds of wisdom and virtue, which ripened into full maturity in the character of a most accomplished man ; directing him to the acquisition of knowledge, as the instrument of action ; teaching him by the cultivation of his reason, to establish and strengthen in his heart the principles of moral rectitude ; and, above all, exhorting him to regulate the whole conduct of his life by the predominant influence of gratitude and obedience to God, as the only sure groundwork of every human duty."

COTTON, Nathaniel,—a distinguished poet and physician. The time and place of his birth are unknown. He resided at St. Albans ; where, in the latter part of his life, he opened a house for the reception of lunatics. Cowper, the poet, at an early period of the fatal malady, that in some degree afflicted him through life, was committed to his care, and experienced from him the most kind and judicious treatment. Dr. Cotton died at St. Albans, in an advanced age, on the second of August, 1788.

"His moral and intellectual character," (says Dr. Anderson in his Complete Edition of the British poets,) "appears to have been, in the highest degree, amiable and respectable.—His poetical compositions are distinguished by a refined elegance of sentiment, and by simplicity of expression. His thoughts are always just, and pure. Under his direction, poetry may be truly said to be subservient to religious and moral instruction. His 'Visions in Verse,' the most popular of his productions, are written in the measure of Gay's Fables ; but in forcibleness of moral and poetical spirit, are unquestionably superior to them. His 'Fables' approach nearer to the manner of Gay. They have great merit of the moral kind ; and they are peculiarly adapted, as well as the Visions, 'for the entertain-

ment and instruction of younger minds." His miscellaneous little poems are highly pleasing and edifying ; particularly, "The Fireside," "Verses to a child of five years old," "Ode on the new Year," "A Sunday Hymn," and "The Night Piece."

COWPER, William,—eminently distinguished by the simplicity, sweetness, and sanctity of his character, both as a man and a poet, was born in 1731, at Berkhamstead, in Hertfordshire. His father, the rev. Dr. John Cowper, was rector of the parish, and nephew of the lord chancellor Cowper.

The infancy of this celebrated poet, was delicate in no common degree ; and his constitution discovered, at a very early season, that morbid tendency to diffidence, despondence, and melancholy, which darkened, as he advanced in years, into the most deplorable depression. He received his education at Westminster-school ; and afterwards studied the law. In the thirty first year of his age, he was appointed, through the interest of his family, clerk of the journals in the House of Lords ; but being summoned to the bar of that house, he was unable to appear, and his terrors, on this occasion, arose to so astonishing a height, that they utterly overwhelmed his reason. His friends acquiesced in the necessity of his relinquishing a station so formidable to his peculiar sensibility ; and they soon after consigned him to the care of Dr. Cotton, the subject of the preceding memoir.

In the summer of 1765, having recovered from this first and severe attack of a most affecting malady, he took lodgings at Huntingdon ; and there he formed an acquaintance with the Unwins, which soon ripened into sincere and fervent friendship. In the course of a few months, he became an inmate in their family ; and received from them, particularly from Mrs. Unwin, all the kind attention which his delicate and drooping mind required. After the death of Mr. Unwin, in 1767, Cowper

removed with Mrs. Unwin to Olney, in Buckinghamshire ; and several years afterwards to Weston, a pleasant village in the vicinity of that town. During his residence at Olney and Weston, he wrote "The Task," and most of his other poems ; and translated, into blank verse, the whole of Homer's Iliad and Odyssey.

In the year 1795, Cowper had sunk into a state of deep and hopeless depression ; and his friend, Mrs. Unwin, was, through age, and repeated paralytic attacks, become almost helpless, and wholly unable to extend to him that tender, maternal care, which had formed one of the chief blessings of his life. In these afflictive circumstances, Mr. Johnson, a cousin, and a beloved young friend, of Cowper's, kindly took charge of the two invalids ; and removed them to his house at East Dereham, in Norfolk. There, Mrs. Unwin expired on the seventeenth of December, 1796 ; and there, after a gradual decline of bodily strength, and after many years of almost uninterrupted gloom, Cowper, the bard of Christianity, the friend and monitor of mankind, gently breathed his last, on the twenty fifth of April, 1800.

An interesting life of Cowper, including a large collection of his letters, has been published, in three volumes quarto, by his friend, Mr. Hayley ; from which the preceding account, and the letters contained in this little work, are extracted. "Cowper's Letters," says his biographer, "breathe, like his verse, a pure spirit of morality and religion ; and they are enlivened by a simple and graceful display of the benevolent affections. They exhibit an uncommon share of religious fervour, innocent playfulness of fancy, and genuine friendship : in these qualities, and in the elegant simplicity of his style, Cowper has scarcely an equal, and certainly not a superior, among the most celebrated letter-writers of England."

DODDRIDGE, Philip,—an eminent dissenting minister, was the son of a respectable tradesman in London,

where he was born, on the twenty sixth of June, 1702. From a child, he was remarkable for his piety and seriousness, his diligent application to learning, and his earnest solicitude to dedicate his time and all his talents to the best and noblest purposes.—In 1729, he was induced by the advice and persuasion of his friends, but with great diffidence of his own abilities, to open an academy at Harborough, for the education of young men intended for the ministry. In the same year, he accepted the charge of a large dissenting congregation at Northampton; and removed thither with his pupils. During a long residence there, of more than twenty one years, he performed with great tenderness and assiduity, and with distinguished success, all the arduous duties of a minister and a tutor.—In 1750, he was seized with a pulmonary complaint; and from that time his health rapidly declined. By the advice of his physicians, and in compliance with the earnest solicitations of his friends, he went to Lisbon, in the autumn of the ensuing year: but all their hopes of his recovery were vain. He landed at Lisbon on the thirteenth of October; but he survived the voyage only a few days, and died on the twenty sixth of October, 1751, in the fiftieth year of his age. His remains were interred in the burying-ground of the British factory at Lisbon.

Of the excellent character of Dr. Doddridge, it is not easy to speak in too high terms. His piety was ardent, unaffected, and cheerful. His moral conduct was, in every respect, highly exemplary. He was a most affectionate husband, father, and friend, and a very kind master; religiously attentive to promote the present comfort, and the eternal happiness, of all who were connected with him by the tender, domestic tie. His deportment was polite, affable, and engaging. He exercised great candour and moderation towards those who differed from him in religious opinions. He never expected, nor desired, that his pupils should blindly follow his sentiments, but encouraged them to judge for themselves; and care-

fully checked in them every appearance of bigotry and uncharitableness.

His most celebrated and popular works, are: "The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul;" "The Family Expositor, or a paraphrase and version of the New Testament, and a practical Improvement of each section;" "The Life of colonel Gardiner;" and three very judicious and excellent "Sermons on the Evidences of Christianity," which the bishop of London (Dr. Porteus) directed to be read by every person intending to take holy orders.—There can be no doubt that these works have, through the Divine blessing, been eminently and extensively useful, in promoting the cause of religion and morality.

GAY, John,—a distinguished English poet, was born at or near Barnstaple, in 1688, and died in London, in 1732.

He was a man of great simplicity, and of an amiable disposition.—His principal production is his "Fables;" one of the most popular works in English verse.—His letter, (inserted in this volume,) containing an account of two lovers struck dead by a flash of lightning, is esteemed a master-piece of epistolary composition. It is written with correctness, grace, and elegance, and, at the same time, with the most affecting simplicity.

GRAY, Thomas,—an eminent English poet, was the son of a money scrivener in London, where he was born, in the year 1716. He received his education at Eton and Cambridge; and soon after he had quitted the latter place he accompanied the honourable Horace Walpole on a tour through Europe. After his return to England, he spent most of the remainder of his life, in academic retirement, at Cambridge; where he took the degree of bachelor of civil law, which gave him every necessary privilege of a university residence. In 1763, the professorship of modern history at Cambridge, with a salary of four

hundred pounds a year, was conferred upon him "unsolicited and unexpected," in the most handsome manner, by the duke of Grafton: but, soon after, his health declined; and he died at Cambridge, on the thirtieth of July, 1771, in the fifty fifth year of his age.

His character was amiable and respectable. With all the poet's warmth of imagination, he had a calm, sedate disposition. He was prudently attentive to economy: but he was very delicate, and even scrupulous, with respect to pecuniary matters; devoid of all tincture of avarice; and bountiful, even when his circumstances were the most narrow. He was temperate and upright; a constant friend to virtue; and much opposed to scepticism and infidelity:

His poems are short, and few in number: but they are, for the most part, eminently beautiful; and they are chaste and moral. His far-famed "Elegy in a country church-yard," one of the most favourite productions of the British muse, transcends all praise. His letters, of which a large collection is interspersed in the Memoirs of his life and writings, published by his faithful friend and executer, the rev. Mr. Mason, are lively, interesting, and instructive, and contain a very pleasing account of his travels. "He that reads," says Dr. Johnson, "his epistolary narration, wishes, that to travel, and to tell his travels, had been more of his employment; but it is by studying at home that we must obtain the ability of travelling with intelligence and improvement."

HALE, sir Matthew,—lord chief justice of England, an eminent lawyer, and a most upright judge, was born at Alderly, in Gloucestershire, in the year 1609. He received a religious education; but he did not, in very early life, act in strict conformity to its precepts. When he was at Oxford, he took much pleasure in stage entertainments: but finding that they tended to corrupt his mind, and to divert his attention from study, he wholly relinquished

them, and resolved, on his going to London, never to see a play again; a resolution to which he steadfastly adhered. When he was a student at Lincoln's Inn, the following striking circumstance made a very salutary impression on his mind. Being with some other young students, invited to a party of pleasure, one of his companions drank to such an excess, that he fell down, apparently dead. Hale was deeply affected on the occasion. He retired into another room; fell on his knees, and prayed earnestly to God that his friend might be restored to life, and that he himself might be pardoned for having given countenance to so much excess; and he made a solemn vow that he would never again keep company in that manner. His friend recovered: Hale religiously observed his vow; and, from that time, spent the remainder of his days in a uniform course of virtue and piety, and paid the most exemplary attention to the duties of his profession.—He died at Alderly, after a long illness, on the twenty sixth of December, 1676, in the sixty seventh year of his age. "He saw with great joy," says bishop Burnet, "his deliverance approaching. In the extremity of his pain, he forbore all complaints or groans; and, with his hands and eyes lifted up, was fixed in his devotions. He continued to enjoy the free use of his reason and sense to the last moment, which he had often and earnestly prayed for, during his sickness; and when his voice was so sunk, that he could not be heard, it was evident from the almost constant lifting up of his eyes and hands, that he was still aspiring towards that blessed state, to which he was speedily to be advanced. His end was peace; he had no struggling, nor seemed to be in any pangs in his last moments."

Sir Matthew Hale's works, on moral and religious subjects, are published in two volumes octavo. His "Contemplations," which form the principal part of them, were written entirely for his own private edification.

They breathe a spirit of serious and fervent piety ; and they are justly held in high estimation.

“Sir Matthew Hale was of a middle stature ; his countenance was engaging ; his conversation affable and interesting ; his temper warm, open, and generous. He was sincere in his attachment to his friends ; and affectionate to his family. However engaged in the service of his country, he neglected not the education of his children. To form their manners, and direct their talents ; to promote in them the practice of virtue and of piety ; to guard them from imprudence, indigence, and misfortune ; were the important objects of his attention. He was a kind and gentle master ; often gave his servants good advice and instruction ; liberally rewarded their faithful services ; and never turned any of them away, except they were so faulty, that there was no hope of reclaiming them. He was very charitable and humane to the poor ; and his mercifulness and kindness extended even to beasts. In his profession, his judgment was clear ; his opinion was authority. When at the bar, nothing could induce him to prostitute his abilities ; and though civil war raged with all the violence of contention, yet he not only preserved his integrity, but lived in ease and security. On the bench, he reigned ‘a pure intelligencer.’ There he was all patience ; and though the temper of the times too often occasioned innovations in the profession, yet he never gave way to injustice, however formidable. Nothing could alarm, nor any thing allure him. He held equity to be not only part of the common law, but also one of its principal grounds. It is almost incredible that one man could acquire the knowledge which he possessed ; but his apprehension was quick, his memory retentive, his judgment sound, and his application indefatigable. Notwithstanding the variety of his avocations, he daily pressed nearer to perfection by a devotion which, though elevated, was rational, and though regular, was warm. He was a religious observer of the sabbath ; and constant in his

attendance on public worship, on that day. For a long time, he concealed the consecration of himself to the strictest duties of religion, lest by some adventitious action he should bring piety into disgrace. He taught the theory of Christianity by his precepts, and the practice by his example. The faith which influenced his own actions, he religiously communicated to others; he improved devotion where he found it, and kindled it where he found it not. May those who study his writings, imitate his life; and those who endeavour after his knowledge, aspire likewise to his piety!"

HAWKESWORTH, John,—an elegant writer, was born in the year 1715. Few particulars of his life are known. He resided, for many years, at Bromley, in Kent; where his wife kept a boarding-school, for young ladies, which was much encouraged, and was a source of considerable emolument. In 1752, he began his most celebrated work, a periodical publication, entitled "The Adventurer;" to which Dr. Johnson was a liberal contributor, and which was afterwards collected into four volumes duodecimo. This work is distinguished by elegance of language, force of sentiment, and an evident tendency to promote virtue and piety. Dr. Herring, archbishop of Canterbury, was so much pleased with it, that he conferred upon the author the degree of doctor of civil law.—In 1772, Hawkesworth was appointed to the very lucrative and honourable office of compiling "An Account of the Voyages undertaken, by order of his present Majesty, for making discoveries in the South Seas;" but the manner in which he executed it, was, in many respects, liable to much and very serious objection. The work was ill received by the public. This circumstance greatly affected and chagrined him; and, it is said, even contributed to shorten his days: for he was a man, who, with many amiable qualities, possessed an irritable temper, and a too poignant sensibility. He died on the sixteenth of No-

learning, and particularly aiming to render the attainments of polite literature subservient to the knowledge and illustration of the Scriptures.

At twenty three years of age, after a due and serious preparation, he took orders; and soon obtained great reputation as a preacher, on account of the excellence of his compositions, and the gracefulness of his elocution.—In May, 1790, he was advanced to the episcopal dignity: but his health, naturally delicate, was then in a very precarious state; and, soon after, his friends observed with sorrow that he rapidly declined. In the autumn of the ensuing year, he had a paralytic stroke. He lingered for a few weeks; during which he retained the full possession of his faculties, and displayed exemplary patience and composure. Full of faith and hope, he died at Bath, on the seventeenth of January, 1792, in the sixty second year of his age.

It seldom falls to the lot of a biographer to record a man so uniformly excellent in character and conduct, as bishop Horne. All his various learning, and all his fine talents, were, with deep humility, consecrated to religion, and to the promotion of the best interests of mankind. His life was exemplarily virtuous. He possessed great simplicity and tenderness of heart. His disposition was cheerful and amiable; and he was a very agreeable, as well as an instructive companion. To most of the public charities, which are the glory of our nation, he was a liberal subscriber; and his private charities also were large and extensive. He laid up nothing from his preferments in the church. When he was no loser at the end of the year, he was perfectly satisfied. The greatest part of what he gave away, was bestowed with so much secrecy, that it was supposed by some persons to be little; but, after his death, when the pensioners to whom he had been a constant benefactor, rose up to look about them for some other support, it began to be known who, and how many, they were.

Dr. Horne's principal work is his "Commentary on

the book of Psalms ;” which displays, in the most striking point of view, his great learning, genius, and piety. His other works are, chiefly : “ Discourses on several subjects ;” “ Considerations on the Life and Death of John the Baptist ;” “ Letters on Infidelity ;” and a “ Letter to Dr. Adam Smith, on the Life, Death, and Philosophy of David Hume, Esq.” In the last mentioned little work, of which an abridgment only is given in this volume, the absurdities of the Scotch philosopher are exposed with clear and conclusive reasoning, and keen though good-humoured irony.

HOUGH, John,—a worthy prelate, was born in the year 1650. He is chiefly memorable for the spirited and judicious resistance which he made to the arbitrary attempt of king James II., to impose a president upon Magdalen college, Oxford. After the revolution, Dr. Hough was made successively bishop of Oxford, of Lichfield and Coventry, and of Worcester. At the time of his translation to the see of Worcester, he was about sixty seven years of age ; yet he lived upwards of twenty six years bishop of that see, and discharged all the episcopal functions with regularity and fidelity. Full of days and of honour, he died, without any pain or sickness, but quite exhausted, on the eighth of March, 1743 ; in the ninety third year of his age, and in the fifty third of his episcopate.—A few days before his death, he wrote a letter to his friend, lord Digby, in which are the following remarkable expressions : “ My hearing has long failed. I am weak and forgetful.—In other respects, I have ease to a degree beyond what I durst have thought on, when years began to multiply upon me. I wait contentedly for a deliverance out of this life into a better ; in humble confidence, that by the mercy of God, through the merits of his Son, I shall stand, at the resurrection, on his right hand. And when you, my lord, have ended those days that are to come, (which I pray may be many and com-

fortable,) as innocently and as exemplarily as those which are past, I doubt not of our meeting in that state, where the joys are unspeakable, and will always endure."

HURD, Richard,—bishop of Worcester, was born, in the year 1720, at Congreve, in Staffordshire. His parents were in humble life; but they were very amiable and respectable persons. He received his education at the grammar school at Brewood, and at Emanuel college, Cambridge; and continued many years a fellow of that college. He resided at Cambridge till 1756, when he accepted the rectory of Thurcaston, in Leicestershire; and, soon after, he published his "**Moral and Political Dialogues**." His great merit, and the recommendation of the earl of Mansfield, procured for him the bishopric of Lichfield and Coventry, and the appointment of preceptor to the prince of Wales. The late king, putting his hand one day upon the Dialogues, said: "'These made Hurd a bishop; I never saw him till he came to kiss hands.'"

In 1781, Dr. Hurd was translated from the see of Lichfield to that of Worcester; and shortly afterwards he declined the primacy, which was offered to him.—He died in the episcopal palace, at Hartlebury, on the twenty eighth of May, 1808, aged eighty eight; highly beloved by his friends, and universally esteemed for his great virtues, and his excellent conduct through the whole course of his long life.—"I have always entertained," says Dr. Porteus, "a high respect and veneration for the character of bishop Hurd: his piety, learning, taste, and genius, rendered him the great ornament of literature and religion; justly gained him not only the esteem, but the affection and confidence of his sovereign; and raised him to that distinguished situation, which, for a long course of years, he filled with so much dignity both in public life, and in an honourable retirement."

The works of this venerable prelate, besides the "**Dialogues**" above mentioned, are: "**An Introduction**

to the study of the Prophecies concerning the Christian Church ;" " A Commentary on Horace's Art of Poetry ;" " Letters on Chivalry and Romance ;" " Sermons preached at Lincoln's Inn ;" " A moral Dissertation on the truth of the Christian Religion ;" and the " Life of Bishop Warburton."

JOHNSON, Samuel,—one of the most eminent of our classical English writers, was born at Lichfield, on the eighteenth of September, 1709. He received his education chiefly at the free school in his native city. His studies at Oxford were of short duration, on account of the insolvency of his father, a bookseller, at Lichfield.—At the age of twenty six, Johnson married Mrs. Porter, a widow. She was much older than himself: but he was sincerely attached to her; and, after a union of more than fifteen years, he deeply regretted her death. Soon after his marriage, he fixed his residence in London. By the publication of his " Dictionary of the English language," his " Rambler," and many other of his admirable works, he obtained only a very scanty and precarious subsistence, till the year 1762, when the late king granted him a pension of three hundred pounds a year, expressly as a reward for the great merit, and the moral tendency, of his writings. A few years afterward, he was highly gratified by an interview with his royal patron, in the library at the queen's house: an honour which was wholly unsolicited and unexpected by him. During the course of the conversation, the king asked him if he intended to publish any more works. Johnson modestly replied, that he thought he had written enough. " I should have thought so too," said the king, " if you had not written so well."

In 1765, Johnson was complimented by the University of Dublin, with the degree of doctor of laws, on account, as the diploma expressly declares, of the singular elegance and utility of his writings: and about ten years afterward, he received a similar honour from the University of Oxford.

scholar should learn humility. It was designed to correct that pride which great parts and great learning are apt to produce in their possessor. In him it had the desired effect. For, though consciousness of superiority might sometimes induce him to carry it high with men, (and even this was much abated in the latter part of life,) his devotions have shown to the world, how humbly he walked at all times with his God.

His example may likewise encourage those of timid and gloomy dispositions not to despond, when they reflect, that the vigour of such an intellect could not preserve its possessor from the depredations of melancholy. They will cease to be surprised and alarmed at the degree of their own sufferings: they will resolve to bear with patience and resignation the malady to which they find a Johnson subject, as well as themselves: and, if they want words, in which to ask relief from HIM who alone can give it, the God of mercy, and Father of all comfort, language affords no finer than those in which his prayers are conceived.

That he should not be conscious of the abilities with which Providence had blessed him, was impossible. He felt his own powers; he felt what he was capable of having performed; and he saw how little, comparatively speaking, he had performed. Hence, his apprehensions on the near prospect of the account to be made, viewed through the medium of constitutional and morbid melancholy, which often excluded from his sight the bright beams of Divine Mercy. May those beams ever shine upon us! But let them not cause us to forget, that talents have been bestowed, of which an account must be rendered; and that the fate of the "unprofitable servant," may justly beget apprehensions in the stoutest mind.—Let us only put in practice the duty of self examination; let us inquire into the success we have experienced in our warfare against the passions, or even against the undue indulgence of the common appetites, eating, drinking, and

sleeping; we shall soon perceive how much more easy it is to form resolutions than to execute them; and we shall no longer find occasion, to wonder at the weakness of Johnson.

The little stories of his oddities and infirmities in common life, will, after a while, be overlooked and forgotten; but his writings will live for ages, still more and more studied and admired, while Britons shall continue to be characterized by a love of elegance and sublimity, of good sense and virtue. The sincerity of his repentance, the steadfastness of his faith, and the fervour of his charity, forbid us to doubt, that his sun set in clouds to rise without them: and of this let us always be mindful, that every one who is made better by his books, will add a wreath to his crown."

JONES, William,—a pious and worthy clergyman of the church of England, was born at Lowick in Northamptonshire in the year 1726. About the year 1776, he accepted the perpetual curacy of Nayland, in Suffolk; and he resided there during the remainder of his days, no future offer of preferment ever tempting him to quit it. He died on the sixth of January, 1800; a few months after his excellent wife, to whom he had been happily united for forty five years, and whose loss he feelingly laments in the letter which is inserted in this volume.

Mr. Jones was a man of considerable abilities, and of great learning. His publications, which are chiefly on religious and philosophical subjects, are very numerous. His work on the "Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity" is highly esteemed.

He was uniform and ardent in his attachment to the interests of piety and virtue. In his moral conduct, he was not only irreproachable, but highly exemplary. His temper and demeanour were placid, humble, and obliging. As far as his means extended, he delighted in doing

good; and towards his flock he uniformly behaved as a most affectionate pastor. To his various knowledge he added that of physic; which he commendably applied to the relief and comfort of his poor neighbours. He discharged all his pastoral duties with exemplary zeal and diligence; but he paid particular attention to the young people of his parish, whom he instructed privately in his own house, and publicly in the church, by a course of catechetical lectures adapted to their capacities.

JONES, sir William,—an eminent lawyer, and a most accomplished scholar, was born in London, in the year 1746. He lost his father when he was only three years of age; and the care of his education devolved upon his mother, a woman of uncommon mental endowments. At seven years of age, he went to Harrow school, and he remained there about ten years: during which time he was enabled, by the most sedulous application, to lay in ample stores of knowledge. He pursued his studies, on a very extensive plan, at University college, Oxford, with the same assiduity and success. In 1770, he entered at the Temple. He did not, however, sacrifice to professional studies all those literary pursuits which till then had so delightfully occupied him. Oriental learning, in particular, continued to attract his attention. In 1783, he was appointed a judge of the supreme court of judicature at Fort William, in Bengal; and at the same time the honour of knighthood was conferred upon him. This appointment had long been the object of his wishes, principally on account of the opportunity which it would afford him of gratifying his love of oriental researches. About the same time, he married a very amiable and accomplished lady, Anna Maria Shipley, the eldest daughter of the bishop of St. Asaph; and she accompanied him into India. The climate was not favourable to his health. On the twentieth of April, 1794, he

was seized, at Calcutta, with an inflammation of the liver, which resisted all remedies ; and, on the twenty seventh of that month, put a period to his existence, without any pain or struggle. He died in the forty eighth year of his age ; in the full vigour of his mental powers, and in the midst of those vast projects of literature, which might have employed an active life protracted to the utmost limits allotted to the human race. Few men have died more respected or more regretted, as few have passed a more useful and irreproachable life.

“ In the short space of forty seven years,” says his excellent friend and biographer, lord Teignmouth, “ he acquired a knowledge of arts, sciences, and languages, which has seldom been equalled, and scarcely, if ever, surpassed. As a philologist, he could boast a universality in which he had no rival. His skill in the idioms of India, Persia, and Arabia, has perhaps never been equalled by any European.—A mere catalogue of his writings, would show the extent and variety of his erudition ; a perusal of them will prove that it was not less deep than miscellaneous. Whatever topic he discusses, his ideas flow with ease and perspicuity. His style is always clear and polished ; animated and forcible when his subject requires it. His Philological, Botanical, Philosophical, and Chronological Disquisitions, his Historical Researches, and even his Persian Grammar, whilst they fix the curiosity and attention of the reader, by the novelty, depth, or importance, of the knowledge displayed in them, always delight by elegance of diction. Literature and science come from his hands, adorned with all their grace and beauty.—Of his studies in general it may be observed, that the end which he always had in view was practical utility ; that knowledge was not accumulated by him, as a source of mere intellectual recreation, or to gratify an idle curiosity, or for the idler purpose of ostentatiously displaying his acquisitions. To render himself useful to his country and mankind, and to promote the prosperity of both, were the

primary and permanent motives of his indefatigable exertions in the pursuit of knowledge.—I could with pleasure expatiate on the independence of his integrity, on his probity, as well as on his humanity and benevolence, of which every living creature participated. I could dwell with rapture on the affability of his conversation and manners, on his modest, unassuming deportment; nor can I refrain from remarking, that he was totally free from pedantry, as well as from that arrogance and self-sufficiency, which sometimes accompany and disgrace the greatest abilities: his presence was the delight of every society, which his conversation exhilarated and improved.”—He was a most exemplary son, brother, and husband. His whole conduct bespoke a truly noble mind. The liberal view which he took of religions in general, heightened his conviction of the truth and importance of the Christian revelation; and an exalted piety completed the excellence of his character.

LYTTELTON, George, lord,—an illustrious English nobleman, and a distinguished writer, was the eldest son of sir Thomas Lyttelton, of Hagley, in Worcestershire; where he was born in the year 1709. When his education was completed, he obtained a seat in parliament; and, in course of time, he filled many high offices of state. In 1741, he married miss Lucy Fortescue, sister of the earl of Clinton. With her he lived in the utmost conjugal harmony and felicity, till her death, which took place in January, 1747; a few days after he had written the letter to his father, (inserted in this volume,) which expresses, in very affecting terms, his tender solicitude for her, and his pious resignation to the will of Heaven. In his beautiful Monody, and in the inscriptions on her monument in the church at Hagley, he has paid a very pleasing tribute to the memory of this amiable and accomplished lady, who died at the early age of twenty nine.

In the pride of juvenile confidence, with the help of cor-

rupt conversation, Lyttelton had entertained doubts of the truth of Christianity; but he was sensible that it is not proper to believe or disbelieve by chance, and he applied himself seriously to an investigation of the subject. His studies being honest, ended in conviction. He found that Religion is true; and what he had learned he endeavoured to teach, by "Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul," published in 1747; "a treatise," says Dr. Johnson, "to which infidelity has never been able to fabricate a specious answer." This book his father had the happiness of seeing; and, in a most affectionate letter to him, expressed his approbation in the following terms. "I have read your religious treatise with infinite pleasure and satisfaction. The style is fine and clear; the arguments are close, cogent, and irresistible. May the King of kings, whose glorious cause you have so well defended, reward your pious labours; and grant that I may be found worthy, through the merits of Jesus Christ, to be an eye-witness of that happiness which, I do not doubt, he will abundantly bestow upon you! In the mean time, I shall never cease glorifying God, for having endowed you with such useful talents, and given me so good a son."—The other writings of lord Lyttelton are, chiefly: "Dialogues of the Dead;" "History of Henry the Second;" and "Miscellaneous Pieces in Prose and Verse."

About two years after the death of his first wife, he married her intimate friend, the eldest daughter of sir Robert Rich: but all his hopes of happiness from a union with this lady were disappointed; and, after a few years, a separation, by mutual consent, took place. This event, together with the profligate conduct and licentious principles of his only son, and other domestic afflictions, greatly embittered the remainder of his days; and afforded full scope for the exercise of his Christian virtues.

He died at Hagley, on the twenty second of August, 1773, aged sixty four. On his deathbed, he said to the physician who attended him: "When I first set out in the

world, I had friends who endeavoured to shake my belief in the Christian religion. I saw difficulties which staggered me; but I kept my mind open to conviction. The evidences and doctrines of Christianity, studied with attention, made me a most firm and persuaded believer of the Christian religion. I have made it the rule of my life; and it is the ground of my future hopes. I have erred and sinned; but I have repented, and I have never indulged in any vicious habit. In politics and public life, I have made the public good the rule of my conduct. I never gave counsels, which I did not, at the time, think the best. I have seen that I was sometimes in the wrong; but I did not err designedly. I have endeavoured, in private life, to do all the good in my power; and I never could, for a moment, indulge malicious or unjust designs upon any person."

Cotemporary writers are lavish in the praise of lord Lyttelton. The following extract from a letter of Dr. Beattie to the earl of Kinnoull, speaks the genuine language of heart-felt affection, respect, and esteem. "Mrs. Montagu is much afflicted at the death of our great and good friend, lord Lyttelton. This event was unexpected; it is little better than a fortnight since I received a very kind letter from him. The loss to his friends, and to society, is unspeakable and irreparable: to himself his death is infinite gain; for, whether we consider what he felt here, or what he hoped for hereafter, we must admit that no man ever had more reason to wish for a dismissal from the evils of this transitory life. His lordship died, as he lived, a most illustrious example of every Christian virtue. His last breath was spent in comforting and instructing his friends. 'Be good and virtuous,' said he to lord Valencia*; 'for know that to this you must come.' The devout and cheerful resignation, that occupied his mind during his illness, did not forsake him in the moment

* His son-in-law.

of dissolution, but fixed a smile on his lifeless countenance. I sincerely sympathize with your lordship on the loss of this excellent man. Since I came last to town, I have had the honour and happiness to pass many an hour in his company, and to converse with him on a great variety of subjects: and I hope I shall be the better while I live, for what I have seen, and what I have heard, of lord Lyttelton."

MELMOTH, William,—the elegant translator of the letters of Cicero and Pliny, and the author of those published under the title of "Fitzosborne's letters on several subjects," was born in 1710. After a useful and respectable life, he died at Bath, (where he had resided for about thirty years,) on the fifteenth of March, 1799, aged eighty nine. He was the eldest son (by a second wife) of an eminent advocate, the author of an excellent and popular treatise on the "Great Importance of a religious Life." The little tribute of filial affection prefixed to that work, deserves a place here: together with Mr. Melmoth's letter inserted in this volume, it reflects honour on the character both of the father and the son. "It may add weight, perhaps, to the reflections contained in the following pages, to inform the reader that the author's life was one uniform exemplar of those precepts, which, with so benevolent a zeal, and so pathetic a simplicity of style, he endeavours to recommend to general practice. He left others to contend for modes of faith, and inflame themselves and the world with endless controversy: it was the wiser purpose of his more ennobled aim, to act up to those clear rules of conduct which Revelation has graciously prescribed. He possessed, by temper, every moral virtue; by religion, every Christian grace. He had a humanity that melted at every distress; a charity which not only thought no evil, but suspected none. He exercised his profession with a skill and integrity, which nothing could equal but the disinterested motive that animated his labours,

or the amiable modesty which accompanied all his virtues. He employed his industry, not to gratify his own desires; no man indulged himself less: not to accumulate useless wealth; no man more disdained so unworthy a pursuit: it was for the decent advancement of his family, for the generous assistance of his friends, for the ready relief of the indigent. How often did he exert his distinguished abilities, yet refuse the reward of them, in defence of 'the widow, the fatherless, and him that had none to help him!' In a word, few have ever passed a more useful, not one a more blameless life: his whole time was employed either in doing good, or in meditating it. He died on the sixth day of April, 1743, in the seventy sixth year of his age; and he lies buried under the cloister of Lincoln's-Inn chapel."

MIDDLETON, Conyers,—a clergyman of the church of England, was born in 1683, and died in 1750.—He was an elegant scholar, and a fine writer. His most celebrated work is his "Life of Cicero."—"He engaged early in religious controversy," says bishop Hurd in his life of Warburton; "and gave just offence to some considerable churchmen: yet he would not condescend to recover their good opinion by retracting what he had hastily and unwarily advanced. Hence, the obstruction to his views of preferment; which, by degrees, soured his temper so much, that his best friends (as Mr. Warburton found by experience) could not calm his resentments, or keep them from breaking out into some unhappy prejudices against Religion itself. His knowledge of theology was but slight, and his talents were not those which qualified him to excel in that science. The bent of his genius lay another way, and had raised him to great eminence in polite literature; of which his 'Letter from Rome,' and his 'Life of Cicero,' are shining instances. His other works will soon be forgotten."—"Had he had," says bishop Warburton, in one of his letters, written a short time before doctor Middle-

ton's death, "I will not say piety, but greatness of mind enough, not to suffer the pretended injuries of some churchmen to prejudice him against religion, I should love him living, and honour his memory when dead. But that man, for the discourtesies done him by his miserable fellow-creatures, should be content to divest himself of the true viaticum, the comfort, the solace, the asylum from all the evils of human life, is perfectly astonishing! I believe no one (all things considered) has suffered more from the low and vile passions of the high and low amongst our brethren, than myself. Yet God forbid, it should ever suffer me to be cold in the interests of the Gospel! which are indeed so much my own, that without it, I should be disposed to consider humanity as the most forlorn part of the creation."

MONTAGU, Elizabeth,—daughter of Matthew Robinson, esq., was born at York, in the year 1720. In 1742, she married Edward Montagu, esq., grandson of the first earl of Sandwich, a gentleman of large property and of great worth.

She derived considerable assistance in her education from the author of the *Life of Cicero*, Dr. Conyers Middleton, who had married her grandmother. In her childhood and youth, her beauty, her uncommon sensibility, vivacity, and wit, attracted peculiar notice and admiration. She did not, in early life, receive those strong impressions of the truth of divine revelation, which she acquired, at a later period, chiefly through the instrumentality of her two excellent friends, Mr. Gilbert West and lord Lyttelton. The steady principles of Christianity corrected the exuberance of her genius, and gave the last touches of improvement to her fine character. As she advanced in life, she displayed uncommon strength of understanding, refinement of taste, and warmth of benevolence. She possessed the friendship, and her hospitable mansion was the favourite resort, of the most eminent per-

sons of her time. She was pleasingly distinguished by her kind attention to poor chimney-sweepers; whom she annually entertained with roast beef and plum pudding, every May-day, on the lawn before her house.

Mr. Montagu, her husband, died in 1775. He was many years older than herself; but she was a most exemplary wife, and they lived together very happily. He showed his great esteem and affection for her, by bequeathing to her almost the whole of his large fortune; of which she made a very noble and liberal use. "Consider me always," says she in a letter to Dr. Beattie, "in the best light in which you can put me, as the banker of the distressed; and, in all senses of the word, I will *honour* your bill.—To assist merit in distress is an Epicurean feast. Indulge this luxury of taste in me, when any remarkable object shall offer itself to your acquaintance." Mrs. Montagu survived her husband many years; and died on the twenty fourth of September, 1800, at her house in Portman square.

She was author of an "Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespeare." Several volumes of her Letters have recently been published.

POPE, Alexander,—the elegant translator of Homer's Iliad and Odyssey, and an original poet of great celebrity, was born in London, on the eighth of June, 1688. He went to several inferior schools; but he derived so little assistance from them, that he may, in good degree, be considered as "self-taught." His predilection for poetry appeared at a very early age.—About the time of the Revolution, his father, who, it is said, was a linendraper in the Strand, quitted business, and retired to Binfield in Windsor Forest. There, Mr. Pope lived, with his parents, till the year 1715: when being enabled by the very liberal subscription which he received for his version of the Iliad, to live more agreeably to his choice than he had done before, he purchased that house at Twickenham, to

which his residence afterwards procured so much celebrity; and he removed thither with his father and mother. His father died about two years after: his mother lived till 1733; and died, at the great age of ninety three, but not unbeloved or unlamented. To the latest moment of her long life, she received from her son the most kind and unwearied attention. In his letters, and in several of his poetical works, he makes very affectionate mention of her, particularly in the following lines.

“ Me, let the tender office long engage,
To rock the cradle of reposing age;
With lenient arts extend a mother’s breath,
Make languor smile, and smooth the bed of death,
Explore the thought, explain the asking eye,
And keep awhile one parent from the sky !”

“ The filial piety of Pope,” says Dr. Johnson in the life of that great poet, “ was in the highest degree amiable and exemplary. His parents had the happiness of living till he was at the summit of poetical reputation, till he was at ease in his fortune, and without a rival in his fame; and they found no diminution of his respect or tenderness. Whatever was his pride, to them he was obedient; and whatever was his irritability, to them he was gentle. Life has, among its soothing and quiet comforts, few things better to give than such a son.”

Mr. Pope was deformed and diminutive in his person, and his constitution was very delicate.—After a long illness, he died at Twickenham, on the thirtieth of May, 1744, in the fifty sixth year of his age.

He has written some beautiful little poems, on religious subjects, particularly “ The Messiah” and “ The dying Christian to his Soul;” and his poetical works in general, abound with fine sentiments and excellent apothegms, pleasingly conveyed to the mind, and easily impressed on the memory, by the peculiar elegance and simplicity of his diction, the smoothness, correctness, and melody of his

numbers. If the effusions of his muse had always been consistent with religion and morality, he might have been esteemed not only one of the first poets that any age or country has produced, but also one of the chief benefactors of mankind.

His Epistolary Correspondence with Swift, Arbuthnot, Atterbury, and many other of his friends, was, at first, published surreptitiously, and afterwards by himself; and it is now included in his works. "It filled the nation," says Dr. Johnson, "with praises of his candour, tenderness, and benevolence, the purity of his purposes, and the fidelity of his friendship. Some read it as a contemporary history, and some as a model of epistolary language. Pope is seen in this collection as connected with other contemporary wits, and certainly he suffers no disgrace in the comparison. But it must be remembered that he had the power of favouring himself; he might have originally had publication in his mind, and have written with care, or have afterwards selected those letters which he had most happily conceived, or most diligently laboured; and I know not whether there does not appear something more studied and artificial in his productions than the rest. He may be said to write always with his reputation in his head."—"Perhaps the most admirable of his letters," says Hayley, "is his farewell to Atterbury," which is inserted in this volume. "It displays both the tenderness and the dignity of true friendship."

PORTEUS, Beilby,—bishop of London, was born at York, on the eighth of May, 1731. He received his academical education at Christ's College, Cambridge; where he resided many years. He was destined for the church, as well by his own deliberate choice, as by the wishes of his family; and accordingly, at the age of twenty six, he took orders. Some years afterwards, he was presented to the rectories of Hunton and of Lambeth; and he resided, alternately, at both those places. In 1776, he was pro-

moted to the see of Chester, and in 1787 to that of London. All his preferments were unsought for and unsolicited by him. In the spring of 1809, after a gradual decline of his health and strength, his end seemed fast approaching. He contemplated that event, and prepared for it, with calm resignation, and devout submission to the will of God. On the eleventh of May, he was, at his own desire, removed from London to Fulham. The change of air and scene seemed to revive him. But on the following day, whilst he was sitting at dinner, he was seized with slight convulsions. Soon after, he fell into a gentle sleep; and without a pang or a sigh, by a transition so easy, as to be known only by a pressure of his hand upon the knee of his servant, who was sitting near him, his spirit departed from its earthly mansion, on the thirteenth of May, 1809, in the seventy ninth year of his age.

This truly Christian bishop was a splendid and benignant light in the world; an ornament to the times in which he lived. In all the various stations which he filled in the church, he was highly distinguished by his persuasive eloquence in the pulpit; by his zealous attachment to the interests of religion and morality; and by his conscientious discharge of all the duties of his profession. Firm and fixed in his own principles, he was candid and liberal in his sentiments of others. He abounded and delighted in acts of charity, of kindness, and beneficence. He was cheerful, meek, and humble, in his disposition; affable and courteous in his deportment. The predominant object of all his wishes and desires, was, "in every thing he did, to do it to the glory of God." He lived as he taught others to live.

His works are: "Sermons;" "Lectures on the Gospel of St. Matthew;" "Life of archbishop Secker;" "Summary of the principal Evidences of the truth and divine origin of the Christian Religion;" "Death, a poem;" and various tracts on useful and important subjects.

ROWE, Elizabeth,—a beautiful, and highly accomplished woman, was born at Ilchester, on the eleventh of September, 1674. She was the daughter of Mr. Walter Singer, a respectable dissenting minister. Very early in life, she discovered great talents for music, painting, and poetry; and a devout turn of mind. In the year 1710, she married Mr. Thomas Rowe, a gentleman of great parts, learning, and worth; with whom she lived very happily for about five years, when it pleased Divine Providence to put a period to his life. Her elegy on this mournful event is deservedly ranked among the best of her poetical works. After the death of her husband, she spent the remainder of her days, in retirement, at Frome. Deeply regretted, especially by the poor of her neighbourhood, to whom she was a most kind benefactress, she died there, after a few hours' illness, (supposed to be an apoplexy) on Sunday morning, February the twentieth, 1737.

Her works are: "Friendship in Death, in twenty letters from the dead to the living;" "Letters Moral and Entertaining;" "Devout Exercises of the Heart in meditation and soliloquy, praise and prayer;" and "Miscellaneous Pieces, in prose and verse."—The promotion of the interests of virtue, and the cultivation of devout feelings, both in herself and others, seems to have been the chief object of the life and writings of this excellent woman.

RUNDLE, Thomas,—bishop of Derry, was born near Tavistock, in Devonshire, about the year 1686. When he was a student at Oxford, he became acquainted with Mr. Edward Talbot, and obtained his friendship. Mr. Talbot died young; but, before his death, he had procured for his friend the notice and patronage of his father, Dr. William Talbot, bishop of Oxford, and afterwards of Durham. Dr. Rundle lived many years in the bishop's family as his domestic chaplain; and he was much respected and beloved by him, and by his son, the

lord chancellor Talbot. To them he was indebted for all his preferments; and he repaid the obligation, by the most faithful and affectionate attachment to them, and to their family. In 1735, he was appointed bishop of Derry; and from that time, he resided chiefly in Ireland. He died at his palace at Dublin, on the fourteenth of April, 1743.

He was a man of lively parts, of great integrity and liberality, and of a mild and benevolent disposition. In a letter to a friend, speaking of two persons, from whom he had met with great, and, as he thought, unreasonable opposition, he says > "But I forgive them both; and though they treat me thus, I would serve them, if I could, to-morrow." "Dr. Rundle," says Mr. Pope, in a letter to Swift, "will be a friend and benefactor to your nation; he will be a friend to the human race, whithersoever he goes."

A small collection of his familiar letters, with a memoir of his life, was published in 1789, in two volumes duodecimo; from which the preceding account is extracted.

RUSSEL, lady Rachel,—daughter of Thomas Wriothesley, earl of Southampton, was born in the year 1636. Her first husband was Francis, lord Vaughan; and, after his death, she married, about the year 1669, the earl of Bedford's eldest son, William, lord Russel, a nobleman of a most amiable disposition, and of great integrity. His zealous attachment to the religion and liberty of his country, betrayed him into some irregular proceedings, in concert with the earl of Essex and several other noblemen. Treasonable designs were imputed to him; he was taken into custody, tried, and condemned. At this eventful period of his life, he experienced, from his wife, the most tender affection blended with uncommon fortitude and magnanimity. She appeared in court at his trial; and when the attorney general told him, that he might employ the hand of one of his servants to take notes of the evidence for his use, he replied, that he desired none, but

that of the lady who sat by him. The spectators, at these words, turned their eyes, and beheld the daughter of the virtuous earl of Southampton, rise up to assist her lord, in his great distress : a thrill of anguish ran through the assembly. After his condemnation, she threw herself at the feet of king Charles the second ; and pleaded, with many tears, the merits and loyalty of her father, in order to save her husband's life. Finding all applications vain, she not only fortified herself against the fatal blow, but endeavoured by her example to strengthen the resolution of her consort. On the twentieth of July, 1683, the eve of his execution, they took leave of each other with a tender and solemn composure. When this affecting scene was over, lord Russel exclaimed : "The bitterness of death is now passed !" for lady Russel was inexpressibly dear to him. He then enlarged much on her merit : said she had been an inestimable blessing to him ; that she had never desired him to do a base thing for the saving of his life ; that there was a signal providence of God in giving him such a wife, in whom were united noble birth and fortune, great understanding, great religion, and great kindness to him, but that her behaviour in his extremity exceeded all ; that it was an unspeakable comfort to him to leave his children in the hands of such a mother ; and that she had promised to take care of herself for their sakes.

Lady Russel survived her husband about forty years, and died on the twenty ninth of September, 1723, in the eighty seventh year of her age ; having, through her long life, discharged, with dignified propriety, the various and important duties of her station.—Her letters have been published in one volume octavo. They display exquisite sensibility, an enlarged mind, and much reflection ; but they are chiefly recommendable for the spirit of piety which they breathe.

SEWARD, Anna,—a distinguished poetess, was born at Eyam in Derbyshire, in the year 1747. She was the

daughter of the rev. Thomas Seward, rector of Eyam, and canon residentiary of Lichfield. Her conversation was peculiarly pleasing and interesting. She possessed an elegant figure; and even in advanced age, the regularity of her features, and the lively expression of her countenance, gave her the appearance of beauty, and almost of youth. Her voice was melodious, guided by a fine taste; and she excelled in reading and recitation. She did not receive a learned education: nor did her father, though himself a poet and a scholar, give much encouragement to her poetical turn, and her love of knowledge; but he early initiated her in English literature, and familiarized her with the classical writers of our nation. By extensive reading, accurate observation, and considerable intercourse with persons of learning and of talents, she acquired a high degree of intellectual improvement.

In the year 1780, her mother died; and, soon after, her father was seized with paralytic and apoplectic affections, which gradually impaired his faculties. The care of attending upon him, and of managing his affairs, devolved entirely upon miss Seward, his only surviving child; and she performed this melancholy duty with great judgment, and with the most exemplary and tender assiduity. It was her constant and very affectionate wish that she might ever

——— “cheer and warm

His drooping heart, and helpless form.”

In 1790, this mournful scene closed by the death of Mr. Seward. His daughter remained mistress of an easy and independent fortune. She continued to inhabit the episcopal palace at Lichfield, which had long been her father's residence; and she died there, on the twenty fifth of March, 1809.

To Walter Scott, esq. she bequeathed, for publication, her poetical works; and to Mr. Constable of Edinburgh, a large collection of her letters, written between the years 1784 and 1807. “Her poems,” says Mr. Scott, “contain

vivid traces of genius ;—and her elegies on major André and captain Cook, convey a high impression of the original powers of their author.” Her letters, published in six volumes, small octavo, exhibit a capacious and well stored mind, and a lively fancy. They abound with anecdotes of distinguished persons ; and with remarks on moral, critical, and political subjects, which, though not always just, are always ingenious. But their principal charm is the lively and natural display of her sentiments, her feelings, and affections ; her ardent love of literature, and regard to its interests ; her genuine applause of contemporary merit ; the enthusiastic warmth of her friendship, unextinguished by absence, or by death ; and, above all, her tender solicitude for her father, and her dutiful, unwearied attention to him, during ten long years of bodily and mental decline. The style of her letters is correct and elegant ; but its beauty and simplicity are much impaired, by the too frequent use which she makes of transposition, of compounded epithets, and of poetical imagery.

SOMERSET, Frances, ^{At}—dutchess of, was less distinguished by her high rank, than by her great piety, virtue, and accomplishments. She was the eldest daughter of the honourable Henry Thynne, only son of Thomas, first viscount Weymouth. She married Algernon Seymour, earl of Hertford, a highly respectable nobleman ; with whom, during a union for a long course of years, she lived in great harmony and conjugal affection. They had two children : George, lord Beauchamp, a very promising youth, (of whom an account is given in “True Stories, or, Interesting Anecdotes of Young Persons,”) who died, on his travels, at nineteen years of age ; and a daughter, who was afterwards dutchess of Northumberland.—In 1748, lord Hertford succeeded to the title and estate of his father, Charles Seymour, duke of Somerset ; and died about two years afterwards.

The dutchess of Somerset, after the loss of her husband,

lived retired at Piercy Lodge, near Colnbrook; and died there on the seventh of July, 1754.

Her Correspondence with the countess of Pomfret, has been published; and several of her letters to Dr. Watts, Dr. Doddridge, Mr. Shenstone, and other distinguished persons, are contained in various collections.—To this noble lady, Thomson dedicates his Spring; and justly characterizes her, as

“fitted or to shine in courts
With unaffected grace, or walk the plain
With innocence and meditation join’d
In soft assemblage.”

STRAFFORD, Thomas Wentworth,—earl of, descended from a very ancient family in Yorkshire, was born in London, on the thirteenth of April, 1593. He possessed great talents, together with uncommon vigour and elevation of mind. The powerful support which he afforded to the government of king Charles the first, and the great favour which he enjoyed with that monarch, rendered him peculiarly obnoxious to the popular party. At the first meeting of the Long Parliament, he was impeached of high treason. On his trial, he made a most noble defence, which he concluded with these remarkable words: “I thank God, I have been, by his blessing, sufficiently instructed in the extreme vanity of all temporary enjoyments, compared to the importance of our eternal duration. And so, my lords, with all humility, and with all tranquillity of mind, I submit, clearly and freely, to your judgments: and, whether that doom shall be to life or death, I shall repose myself, full of gratitude and confidence, in the arms of the great Author of my existence.”

Whitlocke, who was himself the chairman of that committee which conducted the impeachment, observes, with his usual candour: “Certainly, never any man acted such a part, on such a theatre, with more wisdom, con-

stancy, and eloquence, with greater reason, judgment, and temper, and with a better grace in all his words and actions, than did this excellent person; and he moved the hearts of all his auditors, some few excepted, to remorse and pity. His enemies despairing, by a legal prosecution, ever to obtain sentence against him, had recourse to a bill of attainder, which, with difficulty, passed both houses of parliament. The king was strongly urged to give his assent to the bill; and he was intimidated by threats: but he had solemnly assured the earl of his protection, and he felt an anxious concern to save the life of his most faithful friend and minister. Under these affecting circumstances, lord Strafford wrote a letter to him, entreating him, for the sake of public peace, to put an end to his unfortunate however innocent life, and to quiet the tumultuous people by granting them the request for which they were so importunate. "In this," added he, "my consent will more acquit you to God than all the world can do besides. To a willing mind there is no injury. And as, by God's grace, I forgive all the world with a calmness and meekness, which are of infinite contentment to my dislodging soul; so, sir, to you I can resign the life of this world with all imaginable cheerfulness, in just acknowledgment of your exceeding favours." After much agitation and doubt, the king granted a commission to four noblemen to give the royal assent, in his name, to the bill; and he sent his secretary to inform lord Strafford of the final resolution, which necessity had extorted from him. The earl, on receiving the intelligence, seemed surprised and affected; but he soon collected his courage, and, with great piety, prepared himself to suffer the fatal sentence. In passing from his apartment to Tower-Hill, where the scaffold was erected, he stopped under the windows of archbishop Laud, with whom he had long lived in intimate friendship; and entreated the assistance of his prayers, in those awful moments which were approaching. The aged primate dissolved in tears; and having pro-

nounced, with a broken voice, a tender blessing on his departing friend, sunk into the arms of his attendants. Lord Strafford moved on with an elated countenance, and with an air even of greater dignity than that which usually attended him. He was not buoyed up by glory, nor by the affectionate compassion of the spectators. Yet his mind, erect and undaunted, found resources within itself; and maintained its unbroken resolution, amidst the terrors of death, and the triumphant exultation of his misguided enemies. His discourse on the scaffold was full of decency and courage. "He feared," he said, "that the omen was bad for the intended reformation of the state, as it commenced with the shedding of innocent blood." Having bid a last adieu to his brother and friends who attended him, and having sent a blessing to his nearer relations who were absent; "And now," said he, "I have nearly done! One stroke will make my wife a widow, my dear children fatherless, deprive my poor servants of their indulgent master, and separate me from my affectionate brother, and all my friends! But let God be to you, and them, all in all!" Going to disrobe, and prepare himself for the block, "I thank God," said he, "that I am no wise afraid of death, nor am I daunted with any terrors; but I do as cheerfully lay down my head at this time, as ever I did when going to repose." With one blow was a period put to his life by the executioner, on the twelfth of May, 1641.

Thus died, in the forty ninth year of his age, the earl of Strafford, one of the most eminent personages that has appeared in England.—After the Restoration, the bill of attainder was reversed: and even a few weeks after his execution, the Parliament remitted to his children the more severe consequences of his sentence.—The earl of Strafford's Letters were published in two volumes folio, in 1739, by Dr. William Knowler.

SWIFT, Jonathan,—a celebrated political and miscellaneous writer, was born in 1667. He received his education in Ireland; and afterwards resided for some years in the family of sir William Temple, his first patron. He took an active part in politics; and wrote much on political subjects. In 1713, he obtained the deanery of St. Patrick's in Ireland; where he chiefly resided during the remainder of his days. He had, from early youth, been subject to fits of giddiness and deafness; but some years before his death, his memory declined, and he fell into a dreadful state of mingled imbecility and madness, accompanied, at times, by much bodily suffering. He died at St. Patrick's, on the twenty ninth of October, 1745, in the seventy eighth year of his age.

His writings, generally speaking, can scarcely be considered favourable to the interests of religion and morality: many passages in them, both in prose and verse, are highly objectionable, and offensive to delicate and pious minds.—Conciseness and correctness are the distinguishing characteristics of his style.

His letters, of which a large collection is contained in his own works, and in Pope's Epistolary Correspondence, exhibit, in general, a very unamiable character. Many of them are disgraceful to his memory; and it were to be wished, for the honour of humanity, that his epistolary correspondence had not been drained to the dregs. "Of his general habits of thinking," says Dr. Johnson, "if his Letters can be supposed to afford any evidence, he was not a man to be either loved or envied. He seems to have wasted life in discontent, by the rage of neglected pride, and the languishment of unsatisfied desire. He is querulous and fastidious, arrogant and malignant: he scarcely speaks of himself but with indignant lamentations, or of others but with insolent superiority when he is gay, and with angry contempt when he is gloomy." His fine consolatory letter to the earl of Oxford, on the death of his daughter, (which is inserted in this volume,) seems to have

been written in one of his best moments, and is worthy of a better man.

TALBOT, Catherine,—grand daughter of Dr. Talbot, bishop of Durham, and niece of the lord chancellor Talbot, was born in London, in the year 1721. She was the only child of Mr. Edward Talbot, who died five months before her birth. To his recommendation to his father, the bishop of Durham, Dr. Secker, (afterwards archbishop of Canterbury,) was indebted for his first preferments; and he repaid the obligation by the most constant and kind attention to Mr. Talbot's widow and daughter. On his marriage, in 1725, with the sister of the good and pious Dr. Benson, bishop of Gloucester, miss Catherine Benson, who, from motives of friendship, lived with Mrs. Talbot, he invited her and her infant daughter to reside in his family. There, from the time miss Talbot was five years old, they found, as she often acknowledged with grateful sensibility, a very comfortable and pleasant home; and there they lived, with great satisfaction and contentment, till the archbishop died, in the year 1768. By his will, he made a handsome provision for them.

Mrs. Talbot, after his death, took a house in Lower Grosvenor street; where Miss Talbot spent her last days. She did not long survive her kind, paternal friend and benefactor. She had never had good health; and for three years before her death, she was afflicted with a cancer. She bore all her sufferings with great patience and resignation. Her mind was supported with religious hope and consolation. One day, a short time before her decease, when she was expecting almost immediate dissolution, her countenance and deportment, as one of her attending friends observed, indicated not only cheerfulness but joy. She said, "she had that feeling within her, which spoke her happiness near." On the ninth of January, 1770, she tranquilly expired, in the forty ninth year of her age.

Miss Talbot was highly accomplished, and elegant in her person and manners. She possessed a very amiable and truly feminine character: a calm but fervent piety; a tender attachment to her friends; a kind and an unremitting solicitude to relieve the wants, and encourage the good conduct, of the poor; a great relish, and an earnest desire, for intellectual pleasures, but always in subservience to every domestic duty, and every office of humanity, that came within the sphere of her allotted action; and all the noble qualities of her mind, and her fine accomplishments, were beautifully shaded by modesty, humility, and gentleness.—After her death, her writings, consisting of “Reflections on the seven days of the week,” and some other pleasing and edifying little pieces, were published by her much endeared friend, Mrs. Carter. Her Correspondence with that lady, together with other letters of Mrs. Carter, has recently been published, in four volumes octavo. Miss Talbot’s letters, and all her writings, are worthy of her sensible, pious, and affectionate mind.

TEMPLE, sir William,—a celebrated statesman and author, was the son of sir William Temple, master of the rolls in Ireland, and was born in London, in 1629. He was particularly distinguished by his able conduct, and the important services which he rendered to his country, during his residence in Holland, as ambassador from the court of England to the United States. In 1680, he withdrew from public affairs. He spent the remainder of his life in studious and elegant retirement; and died at his seat of Moor Park in Surrey, in the year 1700.

His principal works are: “Memoirs,” containing an account of his public employments; “Observations on the Netherlands;” and “Miscellanies,” which show considerable depth of thought, and convey the result of his valuable experience and accurate reflection on many useful and important subjects.—His letter to lady Essex, which is inserted in this volume, is justly considered a masterpiece of tender reproof and friendly admonition.

TILLOTSON, John,—archbishop of Canterbury, was born, in the year 1630, at Sowerby near Halifax, in Yorkshire. After passing through various stages of preferment in the church, he was advanced in 1691, to the archiepiscopal dignity, or rather compelled to accept it, by king William the third, who highly respected his great merit. He died on the twenty fourth of November, 1694.

The character and conduct of this distinguished prelate, were highly exemplary. He promoted the interests of religion with great zeal and ability, and, at the same time, with great prudence, moderation, and integrity. In his domestic relations, he was mild and gentle, kind, obliging, and affectionate. He was so liberal and humane, that, even while he was in a private station, he appropriated two-tenths of his income to charitable purposes. He was much inveighed against by the enemies of the Revolution, and by many other persons. Yet all the injurious treatment which he received from them, and all the calumnies which they spread against him though utterly false, could not provoke him to the least act of revenge, or even to any expression of anger or malice. After his death, there was found among his papers, a bundle of bitter libels against him, on which he had written with his own hand, this inscription: "I forgive the author of these books; I pray God that he also may forgive them."

Dr. Tillotson's Sermons have been translated into several languages; and they are still held in high estimation. Bishop Warburton, in his letters, says: "I think the Sermons published in Tillotson's life time, are fine moral discourses. They bear, indeed, the character of their author; simple, elegant, candid, clear, and rational."

WARBURTON, William,—bishop of Gloucester, a prelate of extraordinary genius and learning, was the son of a respectable attorney at Newark; where he was born, on the twenty fourth of December, 1698. He lost his

father when he was a child ; and remained under the care of his mother, an excellent woman, for whom he always entertained the tenderest affection and the highest respect. As soon as his school education was finished, he was put clerk to an attorney in Nottinghamshire. But on the expiration of his clerkship, his thirst for general knowledge, and his ardent love of literature, together with the seriousness of his temper and the purity of his morals, induced his friends to yield to his inclination of taking orders ; which he did in 1723, having, with the kind assistance of his cousin, the rev. William Warburton, prepared himself for it with great assiduity and success. In 1728, he was presented, by sir Robert Sutton, to the rectory of Brand-Broughton, in the diocese of Lincoln ; where he resided about twenty years, pursuing his studies with intense application, and devoting all the time that could be spared from the duties of his parish, to reading and writing. In 1746, he accepted, in consequence of the unanimous offer of the society of Lincoln's Inn, the office of their preacher. About the same period, he married miss Gertrude Tucker. From the time of his marriage, he resided chiefly at Prior Park, near Bath, the hospitable mansion of Mr. Allen, his wife's uncle.

In 1760, Dr. Warburton was advanced to the bishopric of Gloucester. Mr. Pitt (afterwards lord Chatham) observed on the occasion, " that nothing of a private nature, since he had been in office, had given him so much pleasure, as his bringing Dr. Warburton upon the bench."—Some years before the bishop's death, his health visibly declined ; and his memory and all his other faculties, were much impaired, though they were never wholly disabled. He expired in the episcopal palace at Gloucester, on the seventh of June, 1779, in the eighty first year of his age.

His most celebrated work is his " Divine Legation of Moses demonstrated ;" which is thus characterized by his friend and biographer, bishop Hurd : " A work, in all

views, of the most transcendent merit, whether we consider the invention, or the execution. A plain, simple argument, yet perfectly new, proving the divinity of the Mosaic Law, and laying a sure foundation for the support of Christianity, is there drawn out to a great length by a chain of reasoning, so elegantly connected, that the reader is carried along it with ease and pleasure; while the matter presented to him is so striking for its own importance, so embellished by a lively fancy, and illustrated, from all quarters, by exquisite learning and the most ingenious disquisition, that, in the whole compass of modern or ancient theology, there is nothing equal or similar to this extraordinary performance." The other works of Dr. Warburton, are chiefly: "The Alliance between Church and State;" "Julian, or, A discourse concerning that emperor's attempt to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem;" "Sermons on the principles of natural and revealed religion, preached at Lincoln's Inn;" and a "View of lord Bolingbroke's Philosophy."—His epistolary correspondence with bishop Hurd, entitled "Letters from a late eminent prelate to one of his friends," has recently been published, in one volume octavo; and a considerable number of his familiar letters is contained in the volume entitled "Letters to and from Dr. Doddridge," edited by the rev. Mr. Stedman.

Bishop Hurd in describing the character of this truly great man, says: "He had an ardent love of virtue, and a sincere zeal for religion. He venerated the civil constitution of his country, and was warmly attached to the Church of England. Yet he was no party man, and was a sincere advocate for toleration.—A perfect honesty of mind, and an unfeigned love of truth, governed his pen in all his religious inquiries. In one of his letters to me, he says: 'I only aim at the honour of God, and the good of men. When I say this, I need not perhaps add (as I do with the utmost seriousness) that I shall never wittingly advance one falsehood, nor conceal or disguise one truth.'

—In private with his friends, he was natural, easy, and unpretending; at once the most agreeable and the most useful companion. His ready wit and extensive knowledge afforded abundant entertainment and information. You saw to the very bottom of his mind on any subject of discourse; and his various literature, penetrating judgment, and quick recollection, made him say the liveliest or the justest things upon it.—He had his foibles, no doubt; but such as we readily excuse, or overlook, in a great character. With more reserve in his writings and conversation, he had passed through the world with fewer enemies; and with a temper less irritable, he would have secured more enjoyment of himself. But these were the imperfections of his nature, or rather the excrescences of his ruling virtues, an uncommon frankness of mind, and sensibility of heart. These qualities appear in all his writings, especially in his private letters: in which a warm affection for his friends, and concern for their interests, are every where expressed; but his tenderness for his family, and, above all, his filial piety, strike us with peculiar force.—He excelled in epistolary composition; for which he was indeed singularly qualified by the characteristic virtues both of his head and heart.”

THE END.

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Literary Panorama, August, 1814.

"These Selections have been made with judgment, and with strict attention to profitable instruction. They, therefore, will not only serve as models for epistolary compositions, but as good vehicles of religious and moral principles."

Anti-jacobin Review, Sept. 1814.

"The rising generation is already under considerable obligations to this writer, and the present volume will much increase them.— The collection is truly classical, and the moral and religious tendency as above stated. With the exception of a few expressions, the work may be cordially recommended to our young readers, and to those who have the superintendence of their education."

Evangelical Magazine, Oct. 1814.

"The Introductory Notes and Observations prefixed to this Selection, contain some judicious remarks on the subject of letter-writing, addressed to young persons; and the Specimens are, upon the whole, well adapted to the design of the publica-

tion.—The Biographical Notices which are appended to the Letters, extend to fifty pages, and form a valuable addition to the work.”

Eclectic Review, November, 1814.

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British Critic, June, 1815.

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The Port Folio, (Philadelphia,) July, 1816.

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Eclectic Review, June, 1810.

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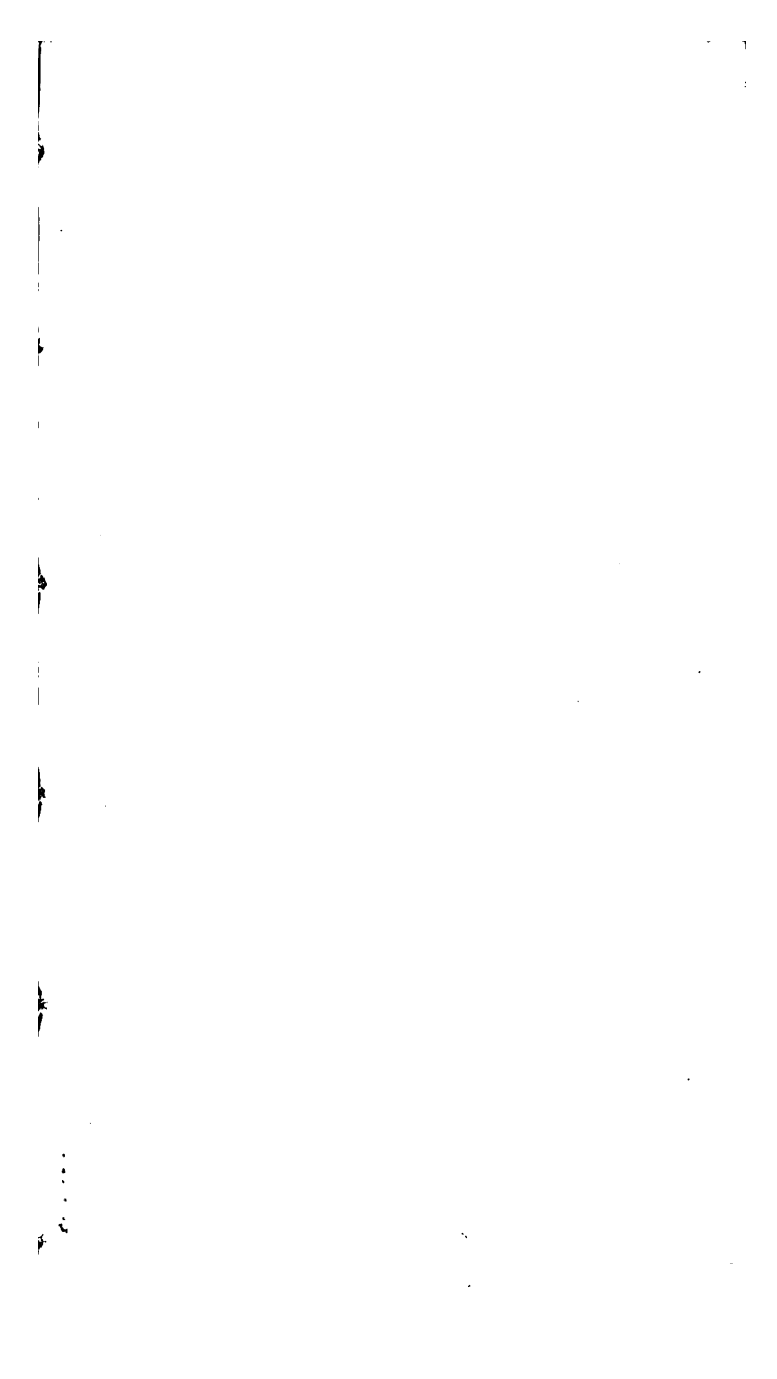
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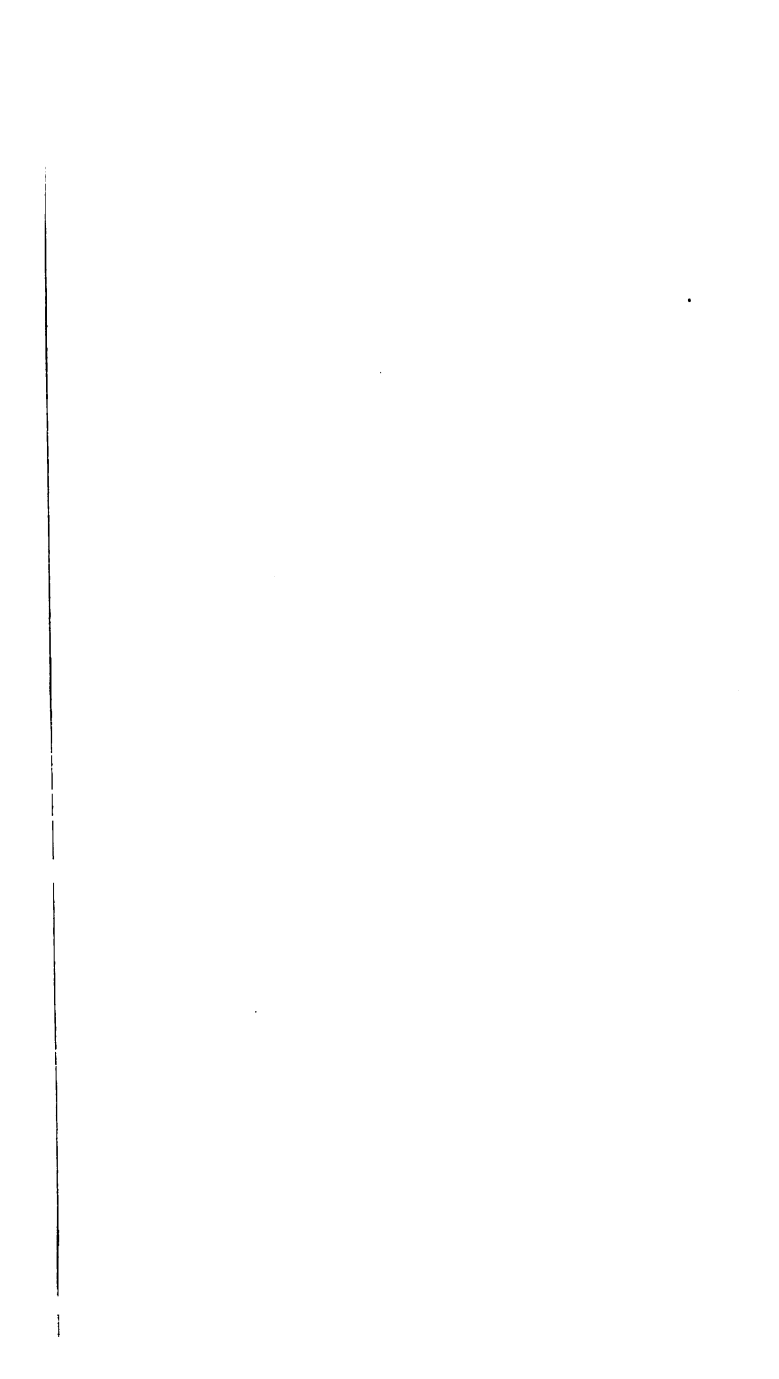
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